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The Quarterly Journal of the Commission on Christian Higher Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America



Knox Lectures by William G. Pollard, Charles Malik, and Theodore M. Greene. Articles by Curtis Larson and Cyrus R. Pangborn. Reviews by Walter Wiest, David G. Moses, J. C. Herrin, Karl H. Hertz, Alexander Miller, John E. Burkhardt, George Hedley. Reports.

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The Editor's Preface

This is a special word to our readers. We wish we might invite you to come directly "behind the scenes" of *The Christian Scholar*. This is, unfortunately, not feasible, especially with the gratifying and continuing increase in our circulation (and, we hope, "readers"). We are, however, grateful to the many persons who write us and who, in this way, invite us to see ourselves as others see us. We appreciate your encouragement, and, equally, your critical comments; both are taken seriously. We continue to be gratified by the large number of manuscripts which are submitted. Not all can be accepted, but all are given full consideration. Because we are engaged, in part, in identifying the "scholars" in relation to whom this publication seeks to serve as a means of communication, we welcome the "new voices" who come to a fuller participation in the community of Christian scholarship through our pages. In order that the dialogue might be carried on more fully still, we are open and receptive to your ideas, suggestions, manuscripts, and criticism, as well as your subscriptions.

Now for a word from the other side of the desk. Our Editorial Board, slightly enlarged over our beginning group in 1953, continues to work very hard at a most difficult task. At the beginning of our venture two years ago, we had only a few hundred paid individual subscribers, whereas we have over three thousand at the present time (bulk subscriptions, institutional copies, and several special promotional programs demanded a printing of 10,000

copies of our December, 1954, issue). This is an extremely diverse circulation, and the Board's judgments on how the *Scholar* is serving and may better serve this diverse community are most helpful. Its recommendations on questions from finance and personnel, to the planning of issues, and the extensive reading of manuscripts circulated for comments, is not only helpful to the editorial staff but is also a way of serving our readership.

Our primary concern is that we may continue to present competent Christian scholarship in these pages. It is our desire to continue to raise the standards of this scholarship in all fields. We hope, in the future, to present still more discussions of the relation which scholars themselves believe to exist between the Christian faith, as understood in a biblical perspective, and the various disciplines of human knowledge. Small editorial consultations are being planned in the near future to consider forthcoming issues, perhaps in rather special areas of knowledge. They will draw together persons who will come to grips with basic questions in order that the *Scholar* may serve as a way of extending discussions. At the same time, we plan to implement further the somewhat new policy on reviews and review-articles begun last fall. Our reports will continue to carry the kind of notices which are of interest to at least some of our readers. The *Scholar* serves, in part at least, as an "organ" for the whole Christian community in higher education and especially for that work which is most directly related to the Commis-

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sion on Christian Higher Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.

Several new emphases are currently being considered. While we do not wish to minimize or in any way interrupt the concern we have to be a scholarly, academic journal, dealing with intellectual questions, we want at the same time to recognize that the concern for persons and the "spiritual dimensions" of the Christian scholar are basic. Though the higher educational task is primarily academic, when it is seen through "the eyes of faith" the problems of discovering what it means to be and to stay *human* and *Christian* in the midst of academic pressures are real and difficult. A publication cannot, of course, serve as the *koinonia*; yet it is, we believe, within the scope of our task to keep something of a balance between our primary intellectual vocation and those means which, at a very practical level, sustain the faith and courage of the Christian person and community in higher education.

Recently, *The Christian Scholar* was referred to as a publication "written by theologians, for theologians." It was intended as criticism. It was not, however, a serious blow for most members of the Editorial Board, but was interpreted instead as a kind of compliment. The task of a Christian in the college and university, whether he is a teacher or student of Bible, history, physics, or economics, and whether he is an administrative officer or the chaplain, is a theological task — *i.e.*, it is the task of thinking and "living" through the implications of the Christian

faith in the immediate responsibilities which the person has in the academic community. No Christian can be really exempted from the hard job of being a theologian; and, the publication which would seek to serve within the Christian community cannot be anything but theological! Nevertheless, the way of meeting the criticism cited is to confront it head on — *i.e.*, to make more explicit the biblical perspective which provides the "orientation" of the Christian world-view. Plans are being made, therefore, to present from time to time such articles and reviews as may be most helpful toward a further exposition of that perspective out of which *The Christian Scholar* seeks to speak to the issues and concerns of higher education. Moreover, an issue devoted to an exploration of some of the major currents in contemporary theology is being planned. Here in particular we will want to ask what has been happening in theology in recent decades, in relation to the ecumenical movement, and in relation to higher education. It is hoped that we may have a somewhat systematic coverage of where we are in Christian thought—the very thought by which the Christian in higher education is living!

The third "area" into which we are called is in the relation of the Christian perspective to the role of education in society and culture. It is natural that such a venture as *The Christian Scholar* would seek to address itself primarily to the Christian community *within* higher education. This is not to be laid aside. However, this as the sole emphasis may reinforce a tragic gap

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between the academic world and the larger human community in which it lives, and which colleges and universities exist to serve under God! The world of our time is symbolized both by curtains and the absence of roots. The curtains serve to divide mankind, ideologically, racially, and in many other ways. Yet the Christian — including the Christian in higher education — is called by his faith in God as the Lord of history and creation to act as though the doors of human community are never closed, as though the antitheses are never final, as though the divisions are never beyond the reach of God who "was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself." At the same

time, whether its competition be strong or weak, the community of education is responsible still for communicating a living past to an on-going future, for rediscovering those resources in the heritage of the past which can serve an age shaken to its foundations, and for creating or recreating those cultural symbols without which man can neither be nor stay human. If this publication can serve to remind the Christian community in higher education that God has called us to serve him *in the world* — the real world of our time — then He may yet have us join Him in bringing something abidingly good out of the current ordeal of civilization.

An Inquiry into the Status of Non-Conceptual Experience

WILLIAM G. POLLARD



T HAS BEEN ONE of the dominant characteristics of western thought during the last several centuries to concern itself with the relationship between the external world and our knowledge of it through perception. This concern has led to a division of all human experience into categories of the objective and the subjective. The human perceiving subject is regarded as standing in some definite relationship to the world about him, the nature of which determines the character of his perceptual experience of it. The specification of the nature of this relationship is the problem of epistemology. Various solutions of this problem have been advanced throughout the course of western thought from Descartes to present day logical positivism. But whatever the metaphysical rules which define the nature of particular solutions of the epistemological problem may be, in all cases the approach to an understanding of human experience which bifurcates it by a division between subject and object is the same.

The essence of this approach to an interrogation of human experience lies in referring all experience to a real external world, the world of "things-in-themselves" or as Kant termed it, of *noumena*, existing in its own right entirely apart from human perception or knowledge. This world is the seat or origin of various disturbances which give rise to human perceptions. The world as apprehended through perception by a human subject is what Kant calls the world of *phenomena*. Out of the moment-by-moment stream of phenomenal experience which passes through his consciousness, the human perceiver extracts elements for which he is able to form concepts like electron, star, tree, rock, etc. These concepts he then finds he can relate to each other by means of propositions, such as "x implies y." In this way he is able to organize his experience and to understand the structure and behavior of the external world which is responsible for it.

At every point he can check the validity of his store of concepts and of the relationships he has established between them by referring them back to new perceptual experience. This is the process of empirical or experimental verification. That portion of his experience which meets this test he then regards as possessing objective validity independent of himself and thus as being real.

This article by William G. Pollard and the two following by Charles Malik and Theodore M. Greene are three of *The Raymond Collyer Knox Memorial Lectures* which were given in April, 1954. More information concerning these lectures will be found in the Reports and Notices section of this issue. William G. Pollard is Executive Director of the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies, Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He is a member of the Editorial Board of *The Christian Scholar*.

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All the rest of his experience for which such a process is not applicable he then classifies as subjective and attributes its origin to some quirk of his own nervous system or to some feature of his own physiology, such as a glandular activity.

Now there are a number of possible questions which can be raised with respect to this procedure. First we may inquire whether it is not possible that some of the non-conceptual elements of our experience may originate from objective external entities just as real as those related to its conceptual elements. Or to put the same query in another way, how can we be sure that in sifting out of the totality of our experience those elements for which we are able to form concepts, we are at the same time sifting out completely just those elements which correspond to realities external to ourselves? Is all reality necessarily of such a character that it can be conceived by the human mind in the form of verbal symbols which can be related to each other in propositions? And, further, if this should not be the case, is there a way of identifying and categorizing those non-conceptual elements of experience which nevertheless stand in the same relationship to external reality as do the conceptual elements? It is with questions such as these that I will be concerned in this lecture.

My own thinking along these lines first became explicit when I had the experience of reading Rudolf Otto's *Das Heilige* which is available in an excellent English translation under the title, *The Idea of the Holy*.¹ Prior to this experience even the notion that any meaning at all could be given to non-conceptual elements of experience had not occurred to me. Moreover, it is, I believe, fair to say that Otto's venture in this essay represents a new departure in western thought. Nothing quite comparable to it had been attempted before. It will, therefore, be helpful to begin with a brief resumé of the main features of his inquiry.

Otto sets himself the task of examining and clearly exhibiting the content of that particular category of experience which is designated by the word "holiness" or "the holy." To begin with he finds that, to a greater or lesser extent in the usage of different cultures at different times and stages, a rational element of this content expressible in terms of moral and ethical concepts can be isolated and identified. But the more distinctly he was able to identify and define this conceptual content of the idea of the holy, the more evident it became that there remained a clear overplus of meaning which completely eludes apprehension in terms of notions for which any definable verbal symbols can be given. Otto's task in this essay is primarily that of isolating and exhibiting this non-conceptual fraction of the total content of the word "holy."

When one first confronts this task, however, he is immediately faced with what would appear to be an insuperable difficulty. For if the objective is to present and

¹Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, English translation by John W. Harvey, Second Edition, Oxford (1950).

clearly exhibit elements of experience which cannot be conceptualized and for which therefore no verbal or other symbols can be devised, how is it possible to speak or to write about such elements at all? Will not every single word used in the discussion necessarily be the symbol for some concept? And is not every sentence employing these words a representation in propositional form of rational relationships among the concepts which they denote? Certainly every word employed in such a discussion will possess a dictionary definition, the purpose of which is to describe as clearly as possible its conceptual content. Considerations such as these would seem to suggest that a treatise in written language devoted to the exposition of non-conceptual and non-rational elements of experience would be a contradiction in terms.

The resolution of this apparent dilemma lies in the dual role and function of words. In the questions above we are thinking of words in their function of *conveying* concepts to others with whom we wish to communicate. But words are equally well employed for the purpose of *evoking* in others non-conceptual experiences which we wish to share with them. The former function is exemplified by the scientific use of the words *gram*, *acceleration*, *electron*, or *valence*; while the latter function is exemplified by the poetic use of such words as *grisly*, *grue*, *weird*, or *wan*. All real language employs words in this double capacity so that they simultaneously convey and evoke. And so we can indeed employ language for the exhibition of non-conceptual experience, as of course every poet already knows. Otto himself describes the process of evoking such experience in his readers as follows: "We can cooperate in this process by bringing before his notice all that can be found in other regions of the mind already known and familiar, to resemble, or again to afford some special contrast to, the particular experience we wish to elucidate. Then we must add: 'This X of ours is not precisely *this* experience, but akin to this one and the opposite of that other. Cannot you now realize for yourself what it is?' In other words our X cannot, strictly speaking be taught, it can only be evoked, awakened in the mind; as everything that comes 'of the spirit' must be awakened."²

In order to clearly designate the category of the completely non-conceptual in the total experience embodied in the word "holy", Otto coins the word "numinous" for this part of the experience. This extremely apt word he derives from the Latin word *numen* in the same way that ominous is derived from the Latin *omen*. In order to designate the object of a numinous experience, in the same sense that a vibrating body is the object for the experience of hearing, he coins the very meaningful term, "mysterium tremendum." The *mysterium tremendum* is that which is often felt in the atmosphere clinging to old churches, lofty cathedrals, or sacred shrines or monuments. It is frequently experienced as peculiarly present on a mountain top, at sea, or in the midst of a storm. Our apprehension of the *mysterium tremendum* comes to us always through a non-conceptual numinous

²Op. cit., p. 7.

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experience, and this experience has certain definable and recognizable characteristics which are related to corresponding attributes of its object.

Otto proceeds by dividing the term into its two component words which he treats separately. He first distinguishes three primary characteristics of the numinous *tremendum* as follows:

The first is *awfulness*. This is the element of fear, of shuddering, of inner dread. But numinous fear is quite different from the conceptual fear inspired by ordinary created things. There is something spectral about it. It is the kind of fear which makes one's "flesh creep" as opposed to the kind which makes one's "blood run cold." It can be daemonic in character and often is in primitive religious experience. The poetry of Edgar Allen Poe is an excellent example of the use of words for the purpose of evoking numinous awe and fear.

The second element is *overpoweringness*. This is the element which arises from the sense of the awful majesty of the *mysterium tremendum*, the sense of the littleness of every creature in the face of that which is above all creatures. This element is powerfully expressed in Isaiah's anguished exclamation in the temple, "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of hosts."

The third is its *urgency* or *energy*. This is the element in the numinous *tremendum* which distinguishes the "living" God from the merely "philosophic" God. It presents itself to the feelings with attributes of vitality, passion, emotional temper, will, force, movement, excitement, activity, and impetus. It gives a strangely personal quality to the *mysterium tremendum*; a quality which is so pronounced in all primitive animism.

Otto then turns to the other word in his synthetic term, and goes on to identify two primary elements of the numinous *mysterium*, the first of which is its quality of being *Wholly Other*. This quality is often expressed negatively as in the 'nothingness,' 'void,' or 'emptiness' of the mystics or the strange 'Nirvana' of Buddhism. On its positive side it is that which is designated in the words 'supernatural' and 'transcendent.' To quote Otto, "The truly 'mysterious' object is beyond our apprehension and comprehension, not only because our knowledge has certain irremovable limits, but because in it we come upon something inherently 'wholly other,' whose kind and character are incommensurable with our own, and before which we therefore recoil in a wonder that strikes us chill and dumb."³

The second attribute of the numinous *mysterium* is its element of *fascination* which Otto describes as follows, "The daemonic-devine object may appear to the

³Loc. cit., p. 28.

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mind an object of horror and dread, but at the same time it is no less something that allures with a potent charm, and the creature, who trembles before it, utterly cowed and cast down, has always at the same time the impulse to turn to it, nay even to make it somehow his own. The 'mystery' is for him not merely something to be wondered at, but something that entrances him; and besides that in it which bewilders and confounds, he feels a something that captivates and transports him with a strange ravishment, rising often enough to the pitch of dizzy intoxication."⁴

This brief resume may serve to give some notion of Otto's method of attack on this problem and of the spirit in which he engaged in his inquiry. It is at any rate all that we shall be able to allot to this aspect of our general field of inquiry in this lecture. Perhaps it has been sufficient to indicate that in our quest for access to external reality we must, if we are to escape the danger of deceiving ourselves, treat all valid human experience with full respect. This involves recognizing the integrity and significance of those elements of our experience which we are unable to conceptualize with the same degree of seriousness which we are accustomed to accord to our conceptual experience. The experiences which Otto designates by the word *numinous* are well nigh universal in all human cultures from the most primitive to the most advanced, and from the mists of prehistory to the present time. They pervade deeply all human literature and art, and the urge to share them with others has been responsible for some of the finest examples of poetic expression in all ages. Anyone who has read Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* or *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, the poetry of Blake or Poe, the essays of John Ruskin, or Goethe's *Faust* will do well at this point to pause and reflect on the status of those elements within them which were awakened by and responded to such reading. Certainly the sweeping denial of any possible external reference for this whole range of bona fide human experience which is so often made in the name of science on the clearly arbitrary *à priori* determination that only the conceptual elements of our experience can correspond to external reality, represents a tragically narrow and wholly arbitrary restriction on the range of our apprehension of the actual world which we inhabit.

The arbitrary and wholly unwarranted character of such a restriction is evident in an extreme degree in many of our contemporary studies of primitive societies and cultures and in the majority of work carried out in the science of comparative religion. Here the bias for an exclusive concern with the conceptual and propositional almost completely destroys the kind of intuitive sympathy with the subject under investigation which is essential to any adequate understanding of it. Indeed the situation is remarkably reminiscent of the difficulties experienced by a small boy trying to comprehend and account for the behavior of an older brother or sister who has fallen in love for the first time. The detached and dis-

⁴p. 31.

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passionate search for the 'bases' and 'sources' of primitive religious experience which typifies such studies divorces them so completely from the primary object of the investigation as to make the results quite deceptive and misleading. The only apparent motivation which such students can find for the phenomena they are pretending to study, which of course are assumed *à priori* to be wholly subjective, are those of explaining and controlling natural phenomena, or of making personal or sociological adjustments. This forces upon the investigator a superior and condescending air, ill befitting the proper humility of science, in which the comparison between the inadequacy of primitive superstition and the sure ability of modern science becomes all too evident. The only way to restore dignity and value to such studies is to recapture a real sympathy for the range of human experience under investigation, and to readmit the external reference which supplies such experiences with their proper object.

It is not only in the category of the holy that we come upon the validity and reality of non-conceptual elements in experience. An obvious area in which essentially the same kind of considerations apply is that of the category of the beautiful. But even in the realm of investigations in physical science, such elements can be identified and their importance in the full apprehension of physical reality recognized. This is nowhere more evident than in the kind of defense which a teacher of physics will make for the necessity of retaining individual laboratory work as an essential part of instruction in the subject. As every such teacher knows, the straightforward rational arguments which he can advance in defense of his position are easily demolished by a determined administration. What he is forced to do then is to fall back on reasons which he is at a loss to find words to express, but which at the same time he recognizes to be the real heart of the matter. He is likely to talk about the sheer beauty and brilliance of a spectrum, or the necessity for his students to really grapple directly in immediate personal confrontation with physical systems and so to directly experience what he might describe as the "cussedness of nature." With these and other similar persuasions he is trying to express that there is much more content in the direct apprehension of physical reality than can be conveyed in the conceptual residuum of it which forms the proper subject matter of the science of physics itself. Every experimental physicist experiences much more when he views directly the elementary particle tracks which appear in the expansion of a Wilson cloud chamber than he can record in his data book. In like manner every biologist experiences elements of reality when he views elementary living systems through a microscope which he is unable to reduce to conceptual symbols and transmit in a text or a treatise as an integral part of his science.

This aspect of scientific investigation has been described with great clarity and insight by the famous German physicist, the discoverer of the uncertainty principle, Professor Werner Heisenberg, in an essay on the famous controversy

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between Newton and Goethe on the theory of light and color.⁵ Newton, the scientist, approached his inquiry into this phenomenon with a determination to identify all of the conceptual elements contained in it which might be propositionally relatable to each other in the form of universal laws. In order to pursue his quest it was necessary for him to confine and profoundly restrict the phenomenon under investigation by compelling a general illumination to pass through narrow slits, and forcing the beam so formed into tortuous and complex paths and subjecting it to radical convolutions. There can, of course, be no question now about the enormous fruitfulness of this approach to an understanding of the phenomenon of light. Yet at the same time, as Heisenberg points out, it must be admitted that a blind man can learn all of physical optics, electromagnetic theory, and quantum electrodynamics without ever having any direct experience of the phenomenon he has concerned himself with explaining.

Goethe, the poet, on the other hand was concerned to preserve the immediate contact with 'living' nature in which resides all of the non-conceptual elements in our experience of it. The source of his interest in the problem seems to have come from a southern journey during which the vivid colors of the Italian landscape captured his imagination and his interest, and are vividly described in his diary. To him Newton's methods and approach to an understanding of the phenomenon which interested them both was totally destructive of those aspects of it which for him were most real and lay closest to the key requirement for its understanding. It is tempting for the modern mind to render a too-simple verdict on the outcome of this controversy by relegating Goethe's theory to the category of the subjective, and therefore doubtless illusory, realm of experience, while regarding Newton's theory as objective, and therefore by modern standards real. But this is merely to give expression to the innate bias toward the conceptual which we are here attempting to cure. As Heisenberg points out, Goethe's approach was from his standpoint as objective in intent as was Newton's from his. He goes on to say, "... it would be a . . . mistake to believe that the poet Goethe had more interest in arousing a vivid impression of the world than in acquiring a real understanding of it. Every genuinely great work of creative writing transmits real understanding of all aspects of life otherwise difficult to grasp. This is especially true of a work like his theory of color which must transmit new understanding and is written with full claims to scientific accuracy."⁶

The point which we are endeavoring to elucidate here is well put by Professor Heisenberg in the following excerpts which are quoted from his essay on this subject:

"Perhaps the difference between the two theories is most accurately defined by saying that they deal with two entirely different levels of reality. We must

⁵Werner Heisenberg, *Philosophic Problems of Nuclear Science*, English translation by F. C. Hayes, Pantheon, New York (1952), pp. 60-76.

⁶Loc. cit., p. 67.

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remember that every word of our language can refer to different aspects of reality. The real meaning of words often emerges only in their context or is determined by tradition and habit . . . The idea that our senses are only imperfect aids in the appreciation of the objective world has guided science further and further away from our immediate world of the senses. A more refined technique of observation has brought to light new aspects of nature previously concealed from us, while parallel to this development the concepts of science have become more abstract and remote from common experience . . . The idea (has been) to sketch as accurate a picture of nature as possible. Now it has turned out that this picture becomes, with increasing accuracy, further and further removed from 'living' nature. Science no longer deals with the world of direct experience but with a dark background of this world brought to light by our experiments. But this means that, in a way, this objective world is a product of our active intervention, and improved technique of observation . . . There has never been progress and discovery without detailed knowledge based on experimental results. But the dangers of modern science are not surmounted in this way. For our experiments are not nature itself, but a nature changed and transformed by our activity in the course of research."⁷

Another way to view the objective status of our non-conceptual experience is to approach the problem from the standpoint of Kant's identification of three-dimensional space and time as necessary requirements for any concept which is accessible to human intuition. Any object which is not a part of ordinary space and time could not, according to Kant's categories, be conceived by the human mind and could not, therefore, be a possible object for our conceptual experience. This requirement does not, however, exclude such an entity from being a possible object for *any kind* of human experience. Insofar as there exists a bona fide category of the non-conceptual, such an entity could well become a proper object for this kind of experience.

The German theologian, Karl Heim, has made very effective use of this approach in a discussion of the status of the supernatural and the transcendent within the context of modern thought forms. Much of our modern difficulty with these notions arises from the vestigial imagery which helped men of former ages give substance and content to these essentially numinous experiences by picturing the natural world as sandwiched between heaven, whose boundaries began somewhere among the clouds, and hell, which lay deep under the earth. From the vantage point of our present view of the universe, this imagery is of course completely inadmissible, and indeed false. But here we must be very cautious; for the imagery is not the equivalent of the non-conceptual experience which it represents. But it is just this experience, not its conceptual image or symbol, which is designated by the words supernatural and transcendent. These continue with unabated prevalence as very real constituents of actual human exper-

⁷Loc. cit., pp. 67, 68, 70, 71.

ience. What we need, therefore, is a new imagery appropriate to our present view and understanding of the world, not an arbitrary refusal to recognize the experience simply because the image which formerly gave substance to it is no longer possible for us.

Now it is a familiar procedure in mathematics to study the properties of an n -dimensional space by imagining it to be immersed in a space of one higher dimension, namely, an $(n+1)$ -dimensional space. In our own case the fact that the particular material universe which it is given us to inhabit happens to be one of one temporal and three spatial dimensions would seem to be a rather special circumstance involving a selection from among several possible spaces which might equally well have been chosen. From this standpoint it is entirely agreeable to the special cast of modern thought to conceive of this universe as being immersed in a space of higher dimension. But such an image immediately provides us again with a means for dealing with the transcendent and the supernatural. Heaven, instead of being above us in ordinary space, is perpendicular to ordinary space, and the eternal is perpendicular to the temporal dimension. The transcendent and the supernatural, instead of being pushed farther and farther away from us with each new advance in astronomy, are again everywhere in immediate contact with us, just as the dimension perpendicular to a plane surface is everywhere in contact with it, though transcendent to it.

Heim makes particularly effective use, in this connection, of a romance published many years ago by Edwin Abbott in the story, *Flatland*. All the inhabitants of Flatland are plane figures bounded by lines enclosing areas, in place of surfaces enclosing volumes as in three-dimensional space. They live in houses which have lines for walls and they enter into relationships with each other and live under limitations which are a source of much amusement for three-dimensional readers of the story. A visitor from Spaceland is able to appear suddenly and to become invisible at will simply by moving out into the third dimension, to which the inhabitants of Flatland have no access. In summarizing the significance of this story for our present concern with the transcendent, Heim observes, "The special significance of the story, *Flatland*, lies precisely in the fact that it demonstrates clearly that we are confined within the space in which we find ourselves when we enter into our existence, as though in a prison from which we cannot escape. The inhabitants of Flatland can, of course, as the story says, *believe* in a third dimension. They may, like the fictitious author of the tale, allow themselves, for the sake of this belief in the third dimension, to be sentenced by the supreme court of the Flatlanders to lifelong confinement in . . . an asylum. They may also dream of this more comprehensive space. But they *cannot* see it."⁸ I would add to this only that we can equally well imagine that the Flatlanders might be able to *experience* entities of three dimensional Spaceland although they would be unable, through the limitations of their two-dimensional intuitions to form *concepts* of

⁸Karl Heim, *Christian Faith and Natural Science*, Harpers (1953); p. 139.

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such entities. All such experience would be necessarily non-conceptual, though none the less real.

Twentieth century philosophy is especially characterized by the state of tension between Logical Positivists on the one hand and Existentialists on the other. Some of the aspects of this tension have a bearing on our concern here with the status of non-conceptual elements of experience. Logical positivism is a particular form of modern philosophy which gives exclusive validity to knowledge obtainable by the methods of the natural sciences. In it the conceptual elements of experience, for which the concepts involved are subject to empirical verification, is by definition the only portion of human experience which can be the subject of any valid human knowledge. The rest of experience is not simply subjective; it is strictly speaking unknown and unknowable, and so is not a fit subject for any sort of valid inquiry, concern, or discussion at all. Existentialism on the other hand is an attitude toward reality, first clearly expressed by Kierkegaard and later systematically developed by Heidegger, which arose as a sharp reaction against the universalist, rationalist course of western philosophy and its exclusive absorption with the problem of perception and its associated categories of objective and subjective. Existentialist thought finds reality in the immediate confrontation of the individual experiencing person with the crises and challenges of the present moment, the here and now. Reality it would say comes to men in flashes of insight out of the depths of their experience of life in the immediate moment, the point at which life is always actually lived. It knows persons as selves or egos, the I and the Thou, and it knows the relationships of persons: love, hate, decision, will, commitment, adventure, anxiety, despair, etc. These are all meaningless categories of reality in positivist thought, but they lie at the heart of reality in existentialism. For the positivist, knowledge is possible only in the sense in which the verb is used in the sentence, "I know the mass of an electron." For the existentialist knowledge is meaningful and non-trivial only in the sense in which the verb is used in the sentence, "I know my wife." The Kintsey report and Fielding's *Tom Jones* are examples respectively of a logical positivist and an existentialist treatment of the same subject; and the reader may judge for himself which approach can potentially yield the greater insight.

It was essential to the welfare of western thought that the existentialist philosophies should have developed and stood in judgment on it. For otherwise, being accompanied by the brilliant growth and triumphs of modern science, it was inexorably and unavoidably moving into the logical positivist trap, cul-de-sac which would have imprisoned the whole intellectual life of western man within the narrow cell walls of his purely conceptual experience. On the other hand this controversy is, in a very real sense, a revival in modern dress of the scholastic conflict of the late Middle Ages between universalists and nominalists. Moreover, this conflict was itself a revival of a long dormant tension which arose initially when the almost exclusively nominalist and existentialist view of reality brought

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by the Judeo-Christian cultural tradition collided with the correspondingly almost exclusively universalist and positivist outlook of the Graeco-Roman or Hellenic culture. It was just the stress and strain generated by the necessity of forging a coherent approach to reality out of those two radically different cultural strains which was responsible for the great creative and formative period of western thought which occurred in the first five centuries of the Christian era. Thus the tension which we now find emerging in twentieth century philosophy is really a reawakening in modern guise of that great creative dialectic which is the true genius of western civilization, and which is grounded in the radical contrasts between the two cultural traditions whose merger was responsible for its formation.

The exclusive and unyielding claims of these two camps of twentieth century thought characterized by a determination on the part of each one to utterly destroy the other represents, it seems to me, a highly regrettable and certainly uncreative impasse. As a physicist I not only regret, but must contest with all the energy at my command, the sweeping indictment of all science and of all universal principles in nature which is made by many existentialist philosophers. The mighty edifice of modern theoretical science is a magnificent, lovely, and awe-inspiring structure which it is sheer folly to attempt to demolish. No one who has enjoyed the privilege of comprehending something of the unity and coherence of its clean-cut, yet intricately beautiful, mathematical framework can ever erase the profound imprint which this vision leaves on his soul. And even in the existentialist's own terms, it is a profoundly sinful thing to urge men to turn their backs completely on this vision. For He who designed and formed this lovely structure to begin with must surely intend that the creature He has produced within it and endowed with the capacity to apprehend it should learn ever more fully to enjoy it with Him.

On the negative side, existentialism, when freed from all the restraints of rational inquiry into conceptual experience with its attendant discipline of experimental verification, is subject to the most flagrant excesses. These range all the way from the sordid and neurotic nihilism and nausea of Sartre to the equally psychopathic emotional excesses of some of the more extreme religious sects which keep appearing on the contemporary scene. Existentialism has profound and essential insights to offer to our largely self-reliant, pragmatic, and positivist age which, without realizing its need, is really becoming desperately restive under its prolonged imprisonment within the walls of the immediately perceivable space-time universe. But once it has been released from this prison and has learned to enjoy the wider freedom of restored contact with the eternal and the transcendent, it must, for its own health and safety, pay frequent visits to the place of its former captivity. For if we should try to ignore this place or even in a fit of revulsion try to deny its very existence, let us beware of the danger of becoming enslaved instead to the awful power of great and terrible daemons, some of whom will present themselves to us in the guise of the divine.

But on the other side of the coin, as one who has been given the precious

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privilege of admission to the sacred ministry of Christ's Holy Church, I equally regret the stiff and uncompromising warfare on existentialism which many scientists and all logical positivists feel compelled to wage. If they had their way they would condemn us all to a dreary round of timeless universal laws and principles in a passionless realm populated only by clearly defined concepts perfectly interconnected with each other, and symbolized by the timeless and adventureless world-lines of general relativity. Even the one element which gives zest and value to the pursuit of a career in science, the adventure of discovery and the joy of apprehension, is in their scheme of things purely subjective, a mere accidental quirk of the human nervous system, without any independent validity or reality.

Logical Positivism has of late taken an interesting turn comparable in significance, though not in substance, to the excesses to which pure existentialism has led. More and more in recent years its devotees have been turning from a concern with the question, "What can we know, and how can our knowledge be validated?" to the question, "How is it possible to express what we know, and to what extent is our knowledge limited by the inadequacies of our means of expression?" In other words the chief challenge to its thought has gradually been transformed from epistemology to semantics. It has had finally to face up to the ultimate problem of language as the vehicle of knowledge. In this enterprise the logical positivists have become remarkably clever and ingenious. It is a fearful thing for an ordinary mortal to fall into the hands of one of them. In a remarkably short time he will find himself completely demolished and reduced to stammering incoherence by repeated incisive and penetrating demands that he explain exactly what he means by each statement he makes, and by scathing demonstrations that he is incapable of doing so.

As a result of this changing emphasis, the objective of logical positivist philosophy has more and more tended to become the invention of an artificial language or an abstract symbolic logic from which every non-conceptual overtone has been removed. This of course is in line with the arbitrary restriction of human experience, insofar as it is taken to have any reference to objective reality, to its purely conceptual and propositional elements. Only by so doing they feel that philosophy can be liberated from the vagaries and ambiguities of all real human language, and further progress in the quest for objective reality made possible for it. But even if they succeed in this task they will still, in their own terms, be faced with the problem of accounting for the origin and evolution of natural language. If they should really face up to this problem honestly, they would discover, I am convinced, that all real language, as the natural vehicle for sharing real human experience among men, is designed not only to *convey* to others in propositional form the definable, conceptual content of that experience, but also to *evoke* in others the inexpressible, non-conceptual content of that experience. If ever the real existence of this latter component of human experience, and the equal validity and reality

of its external reference, is recognized, much of the present tension in modern philosophy will resolve itself.

My plea in this lecture is really for a synthesis between the thesis of positivism and the antithesis of existentialism. The key to this synthesis it seems to me lies in a renewed awareness of, and respect for, the wide range and rich resources of *total* human experience. To achieve this goal we must give full weight and pay equal honor to both the conceptual and the non-conceptual elements of that experience. Western thought has achieved such a synthesis twice before in its history, first with St. Augustine and later with St. Thomas Aquinas. Is it not the true destiny of this twentieth century that western man, schooled in the dark currents of contemporary history and taught by the bottomless anxieties of the present moment, should be challenged a third time to another such great creative period of his intellectual life?

There are those who fear that in turning from our exclusive preoccupation with the bifurcation of human experience into the objective and the subjective, we shall lose the self-regulating discipline and assurance of scientific verification. But a complete reliance on this discipline can be won, as we have seen, only at the expense of denying any validity at all to large segments of real human experience. If we are to replace this preoccupation with a truer view which takes *all* of our experience seriously, the plane of separation between the objective and the subjective will indeed become clouded by the profound mystery of being, and shot through with paradox. Once this has happened to us, we shall assuredly stand in dire need of a higher discipline. But fortunately such a discipline exists, supplementary to the simple but severely limited discipline of empirical verification, and waiting ready-made for us to embrace it. It is the glorious discipline of true Christian humility, the voluntary discipline of the creature awed and cast down before the transcendent power and majesty of his Creator, who is yet enabled to rise exultantly and triumphantly through the power of the love manifested to him in the humility of the cross, and to live thereafter by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the humble joyousness of one who has been made a very son of God and an inheritor of eternal life. This is a glorious discipline, and it represents the most effective assurance against individual excesses, aberrations, and self-delusions which finite human beings are ever likely to enjoy. I am well aware of the many examples of the failure of this discipline in the long history of the Christian Church which many will wish to cite. I would counter such instances, however, with the examples of the all-embracing intellectual discipline of a St. Augustine or a St. Thomas or the equally remarkable moral discipline of a St. Benedict or a St. Francis. And I would point out that life by any standards is a thoroughly dangerous business and involves many perils besides those of mystic excesses, neurotic involvement, or subjective illusions. There is no sure method or guaranteed technique for protecting ourselves by our own ingenuity from all of these dangers. And certainly we shall not solve anything by persistently closing our eyes to, or running away from, large segments of our own very real experience.

The Spiritual Significance of the United Nations

CHARLES MALIK



he United Nations is a political organization. Political considerations on the whole permeate all its activity. It arose at the close of the Second World War mainly for the purpose of "maintaining international peace and security." It is composed of sixty members, all of which are independent, sovereign states. It operates through six separate though interrelated organs: the General Assembly of which every member is a member and ordinary decisions are taken by simple majorities while important decisions require a majority of two-thirds; the Security Council composed of eleven states, five of which—the so-called big five—are permanent, with a special voting system where the so-called veto comes into play; the Economic and Social Council, the Trusteeship Council, the International Court of Justice, and the Secretariat, each with a special mode of election and voting, and with precisely defined functions. The Charter of the United Nations is the fundamental statute of the Organization determining the structure, purpose and function of its various organs.

The members of the Secretariat and of the International Court of Justice are, in the nature of the case, supposed to be above politics; and in general a high degree of integrity and detachment is manifested by the membership and operation of these two organs. But the other four organs of the United Nations—what might be termed the substantive organs, for the sake of which in the last analysis the other two organs exist—whatever their intention may be in theory, in practice are charged—one might almost say supercharged—with politics. Here I use the term "politics" in the highest sense. These sixty nations have each its own fundamental national policy, and its representatives on any of these organs simply put forward and carry out that national policy insofar as it bears upon the activity of that organ. There is no other way in which sovereign entities can act or can come together, and until they are prepared—for whatever reason and under whatever compulsion—to subordinate much more of their sovereignty than they have been willing so far to do under the Charter, the national interests of the individual sovereign states must remain the fundamental spring of action of the United Nations. This is a necessary and good thing, for the United Nations is not a club of armchair idealists, but an organization conceived and constituted by the responsible governments of the world. Unless this essential political character of the United Nations is understood, we cannot appreciate the spiritual significance or lack of significance of the United Nations.

Thus the first question that we must ask is how much international politics admits of spirituality. By spirituality I necessarily mean the recognition of objective, existing norms which judge our action, of which our mind can be ab-

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solutely certain, and to which therefore we voluntarily endeavor to conform. Apart then from the existence of a real objective truth common and accessible to us all, and apart from the unrebelling willingness to respect and submit to such a truth, we cannot speak of spirituality, whatever else we may speak of. The spiritual is the realm of free self-conformation to something—a concrete norm, law, standard, principle, essence—absolutely real, but at the same time quite above our immediate interests. The constraint of the spirit is the free vision of a truth that is more or less wonderful for which one then strenuously craves. The concrete reality of the norm, the transcendence of the norm, our recognition of the norm, and the freedom whereby we joyously seek to conform to the norm—where these things are, there abides the spirit.

I am not here raising the all-absorbing question of the mode of existence of the norm, whether it is a self-subsisting Platonic idea or whether it is further somehow grounded in God. I am only saying that genuine spiritual phenomena arise only when men recognize something higher—higher, I mean, than anything human—something to which they are properly related by fear, not indeed the negative fear of avoiding and running away from that thing, but precisely the positive fear that if they did not seek the fearful thing all would not go well with them. The fear of the Lord, whether the Lord is the living God or a principle, is certainly the beginning of all wisdom.

The question then becomes: do we find such freedom, such objectivity, such transcendence, such humble recognition, in United Nations politics? The answer is almost wholly, but not quite, in the negative. I must now proceed to explain how there is a bare trace of the spirit in the United Nations and why for the most part the spirit is absent from it.

To say that there is some free submission to some objective transcendent norm is, in one sense, to say that there is some agreement among the nations. For when they agree, there is something, no matter how modest or formal, that brings them together.

They have agreed to set up the United Nations, and they continue to attach great importance to it, as is evidenced by the facts (a) that the Organization has not broken up despite many setbacks and many discouragements, (b) that some members have received searing defeats in it and yet they would never dream of withdrawing from it, (c) that responsible leaders in the United States, in the United Kingdom, in India, and in the Soviet Union have repeatedly proclaimed support of the United Nations as a cornerstone in their national policy, (d) that some of these leaders have criticized certain policies precisely because they were not conceived and carried out within the United Nations, (e) that the United Nations has been time and again chosen, as for instance by President Eisenhower last December, as an appropriate platform for the enunciation of fundamental policy, and (f) that evidently such great store is set by member-

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ship in the United Nations that one of the great international issues of the present moment turns precisely around whether Communist China should or should not be admitted to the United Nations.

They have agreed that the permanent headquarters of the United Nations should be in New York, a very important decision so far as the interpenetration of the United States and the world is concerned. They have agreed on the Charter of the United Nations, one of the basic international documents of this age, with its aims of maintaining international peace and security, of developing friendly relations among nations, of respecting the equal rights and self-determination of peoples, of seeking international cooperation in economic, social, cultural and humanitarian realms, of promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, of having all members pledge themselves to settle their disputes by peaceful means and to refrain in their international dealings from the threat or use of force, and of giving to the big nations with mighty military resources primary responsibility for the maintenance in unison of international peace and security. The fact that in practice these ideals and engagements of the Charter were not fully honored certainly expresses and reflects upon the political realities of the world, but does not detract from the theoretical recognition by the nations of these ideals as norms worthy of elucidation and respect; and it is this recognition that confers some unity, some sort of spiritual aegis, some underlying frame of reference, upon the activity of the United Nations. They have agreed on rules of procedure, on certain proprieties and amenities, for the mere conduct of business, rules and proprieties derived for the most part from the experience of deliberative national bodies, but adapted for the necessarily greater freedom that representatives of sovereign states must enjoy. They have agreed on certain expressions of hope that the big nations redouble their efforts to explore by all possible means how they might promote peaceful understandings among themselves. They have agreed on setting up machinery and making sizable contributions for extending to the less developed regions of the world some technical assistance that might help them in developing themselves. They have agreed on a Declaration of Human Rights setting forth what is believed to belong to the essential dignity of man, a Declaration that will certainly go down as among the fundamental creations of this epoch. They have agreed on many other resolutions of varying degrees of importance or efficacy, though of course this measure of agreement, whether because of the issues involved or because of the development of factors entirely outside the pale of the Organization, has not been able by itself to arrest the steady deterioration of the world situation. Where agreement was not general, distinct blocs formed within the United Nations, such, for instance, as the Soviet bloc, the Latin American bloc, the Arab bloc, the Asian-African bloc, the British bloc, the Western European bloc, the Atlantic bloc, the colonial bloc, the anti-colonial bloc, the industrial bloc, the bloc of the underdeveloped, the bloc of the free world; blocs whose principle of formation was either political or economic or regional or

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racial and cultural, but in every case a real objective principle of solidarity bringing nations together and calling forth their spiritual loyalty to something beyond themselves. The action of the United Nations, such as it has been, expresses in effect the interlacing, interaction, interpenetration of this bewildering profusion of blocs.

The spiritual comes into play whenever men seek in freedom something real beyond themselves. To be sure, the grade of spirituality is measured by the object sought, but regardless of this fundamental question of depth and order, wherever men agree in freedom, there is a common bond among them which expresses and engenders spiritual energy. There are these diverse ways in which the nations have agreed either partially or wholly, and to that extent the United Nations reflects something spiritual. The element of freedom is ensured by the principle of "sovereign equality," for there is in principle complete equality in freedom among the member nations, and no nation is compelled, *under the Charter*, to adopt any policy it has not already freely and willingly accepted under the Charter when it became a member of the Organization. For the student of the spirit, then, it is significant that there is so much real, though to be sure modest, community of mind among the nations. At least this irreducible residue of spiritual unity will remain: that in this age when the world has miraculously shrunk into a neighborhood, when international war, by reason of the current technological revolution, entails universal risks of unprecedented kind and magnitude, the nations, no matter how much they might disagree on every issue, no matter how exasperating and disgusting and frustrating every conference turns out to be, must have a place where and a mechanism through which they can physically meet and confer. *In an age of total danger, the norm of conference of the nations is the one abiding spiritual bond among them.* It follows that if the United Nations is scrapped today, another world instrument will arise tomorrow. In an age of indispensable world organization nothing is more necessary or has a more assured future than the United Nations or whatever world system might succeed it tomorrow.

Of the diverse activities of the United Nations, none is more pregnant with spiritual significance than the work on human rights. Whoever studies the proceedings on this question with a searching and critical mind will come out with a depth of vision concerning the great issues of this age which he can perhaps acquire in no other way. For the central theme of this undertaking is to determine the proper nature of man, and to seek ways and means for ensuring that nature against any violation. Since, however, it can be shown that the tragic conflicts of our times are all rooted in man's division over his own interpretation of himself—of his origin, his essence, his destiny, his place in the universe—it is evident that in the human rights enterprise these conflicts come to the sharpest focus, and that not between armchair philosophers or well-meaning idealists, but among the responsible representatives of the governments and effective cultures of the whole world.

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The structure of the vision that this concern over the last nine years discloses in the sharpest and concrete form includes: (a) the conviction that the Second World War was caused at least in part by a brutal assault upon human rights by the doctrine and practice of the Nazis and Fascists; (b) the decisive part played by the churches and the non-governmental organizations in general in incorporating in the Charter the present significant undertakings with respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms; (c) the fact that the doctrine of the Charter places concern for human rights as second only to concern for peace and security and establishes a sort of casual connection between the two; (d) the way in which diverse cultures, outlooks, traditions, legal systems, schools of thought, individual thinkers, contributed to the formation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; (e) the relationship, both positive and negative, of this Declaration to its great historical predecessors, such as the English Magna Carta, the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, the American Bill of Rights, and the Atlantic Charter; (f) the amazing manner in which this Declaration has energized during the last six years in courts of law, in new national constitutions, in the platforms of political parties, in the debates and resolutions of the United Nations, in international treaties, in the statements of American leaders, and in the consciences of men; (g) the question of materialism, debated concretely again and again at length, namely, which is more fundamental, man's material and economic rights and needs, or man's political, personal and intellectual rights; (h) the question of socialism, debated concretely again and again at length, namely, the question as to the place of the individual human person in modern society, whether, namely, man is free vis-a-vis his social group or whether he is completely and absolutely determined by it; (i) the question of totalitarianism, debated concretely again and again at length, namely, which is for the sake of the other, the individual human person or the state; (j) the question of order and articulation and hierarchy of human rights; (k) the question as to whether there is an irreducible core of essential rights from which there can be no derogation whatsoever under any circumstances; (l) the question of the place of the intermediate institutions, such as the family, the school, the church, the circle of friends, in the nurture of our fundamental freedoms; (m) the question of the origin and status of these rights, namely, whether they are conferred upon me by society or the government or the United Nations, or whether they originally constitute my natural dignity as a human being; (n) the question of how human rights may be implemented—by international conventions, by the setting up of an international organ precisely for this purpose, or by the gradual process of education and internal legislation; (o) the question of whether and how petitions and complaints are to be received and acted upon by some international agent; and (p) the strange phenomenon of the absence of vigorous moral leadership in this field among the nations, thus demonstrating how in this age of universal fear and distrust political calculation overwhelms any sense of universal spiritual mission.

These are among the most important issues of this age, and nowhere have they received as dramatic, as authoritative, as exhaustive, as responsible a discussion as they have in the United Nations. The tragic concrete dialectic between the political and the spiritual is best revealed in the living clash of thought and the tangled problematic of the human rights debates in the United Nations during the last nine years. And when the Western world, perhaps after much suffering still, wakes up one day to the necessity of taking the current war of ideas infinitely more seriously than it has, and when it then plans to make a vigorous ideological counteroffensive, I dare predict it will find in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights a potent weapon for that purpose.

Whether or not the decisions of the various bodies of the United Nations have been implemented, some of the debates of this Organization are of the greatest importance. There is an almost infinite wealth of spiritual significance in the clash of opinion, idea, aspiration, national policy, individuality, which is our daily experience at the United Nations. After one of these debates—say the debate on the Essentials of Peace in 1949—one feels he has undergone a profound spiritual *catharsis*. If you want to know the history-fashioning movements in the world today, movements like Communism, nationalism, anti-colonialism, national liberation, the development of the underdeveloped, the urge at peace and disarmament, the fellowship of the Asian countries; if you want to see and enjoy the turn of thought and humor and expression with which the representatives of these movements articulate themselves; if you want to observe how these movements clash and coalesce in a practically infinite variety of forms; if you want to appreciate the legalism of the French, the empiricism of the British, the economism of the Americans, the profuse imagery of the Russians, the humane oratory of the Latin Americans, the impulse at self-assertion of Asia and Africa; if you desire to be educated in these matters, you can certainly read about them in books, but what a pale and distant reflection books reveal by comparison with responsible participation in the living enactment of these things in actual contest. And the objective arena of this contest is none other than the United Nations. If you watch and take part in this contest, both behind the scenes and on the stage, day after day and year after year, you will soon acquire a few priceless persuasions about human nature and about the real effective forces in the world today. You may then see that pride, dignity, fear, freedom, security, comfort, self-seeking, a certain irreducible belief in one's own national and cultural values, actuate men and nations everywhere; that the West really faces three formidable challenges, the challenge of Communism, the challenge of the rising East, and the challenge of freedom—namely, of the West's own internal problems, above all, the political, moral and spiritual problems; that when you are dealing with mass fears and aspirations the norms of conduct of individuals do not strictly apply; that although you may be sure of your votes, it is most important also that your friends believe in your integrity, honesty and devotion to

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truth; that the one great failing of the West is in the power of articulation and conviction; that nothing therefore is more needful than belief in reason, argument, fundamental ideas; that you are not really dealing with sixty separate units indifferently and equally related to one another, but with half a dozen cultural groupings acting each for the most part as a whole; that the cold war, the critical state of tension between the Communist and the Western worlds, enters into and qualifies every international endeavor; that nothing is more important for peace and understanding than the opportunity which the United Nations affords for the Soviets to be everlastingly confronted and challenged, on every level, by the West, and for the West to be everlastingly confronted and challenged, on every level, by the Soviets; that only through this unceasing mutuality of challenge can these two world forces break through the abstract constructions of their own imaginations under which they have been living as in a fool's paradise, and face what each is really up against; that Marx and his followers constitute a radical rebellion against some of the most important spiritual values of the East and West alike; and that unless Marx and his movement are adequately answered and arrested on every level—militarily, politically, economically, and above all, theoretically and spiritually—the best intentions in the United Nations will always be vitiated. I suppose an organization that helps elucidate these issues in concrete debate is not without spiritual significance.

One great value of the United Nations has been to serve as a training ground for the emerging nations. A score of independent nations has arisen in recent years, and their participation in the United Nations has afforded them an excellent opportunity of flexing the muscles of their responsibility. The meaning of both the United States and the Soviet Union is to liberate dependent territories, though of course in different senses and with different ends in view. This formal agreement between these two power giants has made possible the enjoyment of "sovereign equality" within the United Nations even by the small countries. The United Nations is thus conceived as the one fellowship to which all belong, in which all national points of view may be represented, all political forces brought into play. Because the small nations are not as politically engaged as the big ones, in many an issue of principle they could perhaps speak with greater moral clarity. But this so-called "moral leadership" of the small and middle nations should not be exaggerated, and that for two reasons: it may give them a sense of false security altogether out of proportion to what the United Nations really provides, and in power relations, authority, even moral authority, is a direct function of responsibility. There is no blinking the fact that the weakness, the brokenness, the humility, the joy, the certainty of the spirit hardly has a chance to assert itself in the United Nations.

Thus we must not exaggerate the positive spiritual significance of the United Nations. Considering the infinite dimensions of the spirit, considering the desperate

spiritual needs of the moment, and considering by comparison the concrete meagre spiritual output of the United Nations, it were far more correct to say, I suggest, that if you were seeking real spiritual phenomena, you would not find them in the United Nations. In the first place, although there is agreement on the text of the Charter and of many resolutions, the nations often give conflicting interpretations of these texts. Terms like "peace," "justice," "progress," "science," "free elections," "freely expressed wishes of the people," "self-determination of peoples," "government," "law," "democracy," "arbitrary action," "human rights and fundamental freedoms," "human dignity," "independence," "sovereignty," "aggression," "fascism," "warmongering," these and suchlike terms are, mathematically speaking, variables whose real value is variously assigned by different nations. When certain texts are adopted, we all know not only that they admit of varying interpretations but precisely where and how these interpretations are likely to turn up. Thus we all enter into a sort of tacit conspiracy to employ the felicitously ambiguous phrase, under the obvious conviction that, at least for the present, it is far better to agree on what is essentially ambiguous and variable than to disagree on what is unambiguous and constant. The effect is a perpetual postponement of a showdown on meaning, for the nations do not seem yet to be prepared to face all the consequences of a possible showdown. But it is obvious such a day cannot be indefinitely put off, for the spirit of man requires some identity of meaning if it is to live. If there is only the prospect of verbal and formal agreement, and even that in relatively unimportant realms, and no prospect of agreement as to meaning and intention and concrete content, not even in these superficial realms, let alone in the deeper realms of life, then the peoples of the world will soon despair of all international organization. A showdown is sooner or later inevitable with regard to the possibility of real, significant, spiritual agreement.

Again, compare the questions on which there was agreement with those on which there was no agreement, and you will find that the latter are by far the more important. There was a significant split in the ranks of the United Nations with regard to Korea, to disarmament, to the control and regulation of atomic weapons, to many colonial issues, to fundamental matters in the later stages of the development of the human rights program, to mention only a few such important areas. All other agreement would go up in smoke if there should be a mishap with respect to the central aim of the Organization—the maintenance and strengthening of international peace and security. To be sure, the lack of agreement here is not the fault of the United Nations, but whatever its cause, its effect is to depress considerably the spiritual significance of the United Nations.

Moreover, the blocs to which I referred before formed themselves for the most part independently of the United Nations, and the Councils and Committees of this Organization served for the most part only as occasions or platforms in which these blocs manifested decisions they had severally already arrived at outside and independently of the United Nations. This circumstance lends a theatrical

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effect upon the United Nations: we seem only to have a stage on which acts prepared and rehearsed outside are enacted. There is no escape from the inevitable fact that the United Nations is but a derivative reality of which the original is the chancellaries of the nations in their decisions both individually and in the groupings to which they belong apart from the United Nations. But these groupings have interests and aims quite at variance with one another, and when they all get together with a view to achieving some world decision, the currents, cross-currents and undercurrents are so varied and opposite that the net result is either zero or something eminently approaching that posture. The spirit is undermined at its source when it faces futility after futility.

The two most important features so far as the effectiveness of the United Nations is concerned are, first, the fact that General Assembly decisions have only the force of recommendations, and second, that the veto operates in the Security Council. Whoever studies what really happened at Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco will realize that without these two conditions the United Nations would never have been set up. In security matters the big powers—and this meant the planning and inviting powers—were unitedly adamant that they must reserve for themselves the right of veto in the Security Council, and in general matters they would allow "sovereign equality" in the General Assembly—i.e., practically the right of every nation, be it Luxembourg or the United States of America, to cast but one vote of equal value—only on condition that the resolutions of this body have the legal force of a recommendation. Considering the power realities of the world, these two conditions were unavoidable. But the records of the General Assembly and the Councils which operate along its lines are cluttered with resolutions which, despite the attenuation resulting from the process of compromise among viewpoints so varied and so conflicting, remain for the most part a dead letter; and the Security Council is virtually paralyzed on account of the veto, whether this is cast positively or negatively in the form of the necessary number of abstentions. The result is the settling of a pall of unreality and irrelevance upon the United Nations. In such an atmosphere the spirit suffers and seeks salvation elsewhere.

There has been a steady decline in seriousness and responsibility so far as some of the non-political functions of the United Nations are concerned. The discussion at times bears no relation whatever either to the home conditions of some of the members or to what is really possible under the circumstances. Attitudes are often developed either from rhetorical or from emotional or from spiteful motives. There is thus an element of individual caprice, and in some cases representatives really represent only themselves, with only the most tenuous possible relationship to the policy or will of their governments. It would seem that in those bodies their governments do not really care what transpires. When one harangues on, say, the subject of human rights in some other country towards which for one reason or another one harbors some grievance, without humble

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reflection on the state of human rights in one's own land; or when one urges a text that, even if adopted, you know and he knows and everybody knows his country will not bind itself by; when these things happen, there is obviously a tragicomic divorce from reality which can only be described as a sin against the truth. If in the organs where the spirit is supposed to act under its own autonomous laws in relative freedom from the operations of power and pride, the spirit nonetheless sinks to such levels, need we wonder at the deterioration in the political functionings of the United Nations whose constituent principles are precisely pride and power?

The source of all evil is the absolutization of politics. Nations and cultures do not fear God: on the contrary, they set themselves up as a sort of god, with nothing above them. The supreme need therefore is for the recognition of some transcendent norm to which we willingly and freely submit.

Since desire, whether of power or of material goods, has no limits, and since the field of power and of matter is quite limited, it is obvious, conflict and clash are inevitable. The answer therefore is the self-curbing of desire. But this can come about either negatively when one is physically restrained from without, or positively when one recognizes a larger loyalty with which one freely identifies oneself. Negative obstruction is never stable: it is mechanical and external. The only answer therefore is inner self-restraint under a genuine community of ideas. This is the way of freedom.

The promotion of larger ideals, more universal norms, elaborated, not arbitrarily, but according to the nature of things—I mean norms concerning justice and truth, concerning man and his dignity, concerning the place of material goods in human life, concerning the source of political power, concerning freedom of thought and conscience, concerning intercultural interaction and respect, concerning how to meet aggression, whether it comes by external invasion or by internal subversion effectively directed from without—the promotion of some binding understanding among the nations upon these fundamental things is the only hope for peace in the world.

But faith in such promotion means necessarily faith in the unity of mankind in the truth, namely, faith that there is an objective common good for all men, that it is not something arbitrary but belongs to the nature of things, that we are not therefore the subjects of some cosmic trick, but that we can, by effort and inquiry and discourse and reason and love, discover this common good and completely fling ourselves upon it. Let men believe, absolutely believe, honestly and genuinely believe, in the existence and accessibility of a real common good, and they will forthwith stop fighting; instead they will seek this good with all their heart.

It is despair of the objectively given common good that is at the base of all evil in the world. One does not mind difference of opinion, of outlook, of

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interest, of temperament, even of culture, provided there is fundamentally no despair of the truth. We will bear then all our differences, no matter how radical, because of the prize of the great common good above us all, a good that we may not now clearly glimpse but which is nonetheless certainly there beckoning us all the time.

Peace is promised to men of good will, namely, in my judgment, to the men who allow for the possibility of a rational common good; but even angels, if faced with men who absolutely reject such a possibility, who teach instead that the good is not determined by reason and love but by force—no matter how ingenious their dialectical interpretations of this force might be—even angels, I say, facing such a breed of men must take up arms and fight.

War arises either from hatred or from fear or from greed, and all three are fundamental sins against reason. For hatred at bottom wills the elimination of the other fellow, because it is blind to the possibility that there is a truth, a community of the spirit, that can bracket you both, provided both of you are humbly and practically exposed to it. Fear, on the other hand, fears precisely that the other fellow rejects such a possibility, and therefore moves to strike first. Greed does not recognize the truth of objective justice, namely, that infinite desire is the source of all evil because while there may be enough and plenty for all our need, as a matter of fact there is not enough for all our greed.

The spirit flourishes and peace supervenes when men believe in the possibility of a real, common, natural good.

Overshadowing everything is the terrible chasm between Communism and the rest of the world. In all fundamental issues the two power blocs eye each other all the time, and whatever posture they take, it is in function of the cold war that they take it. But the rest of us are thus offended twice: first because we are not taken into account except as incidents in the requirements of the cold war, and second because we see no progress whatever made by the Soviet Union and the Western world in the settlement of their disputes. We would gladly forgive our personal affront if only the giants showed some progress in their war. Nothing therefore is more certain than that until a fundamental settlement is arrived at between Communism and the rest of the world, the spirit in the United Nations will continue laboring under profound tribulation.

Considering soberly the actualities and potentialities of power in the world, and affirming faith in the traditional view of man and his spirit, it would seem that this settlement must include (a) the effective independence of China, (b) the effective independence of Eastern Europe so as to restore fundamental unity to European culture, (c) the radical giving up by the followers of Marx of their revolutionary teaching and technique, (d) a much greater freedom of movement between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world with respect to goods, men and ideals, (e) adequate security assurances for the Soviet Union, and (f)

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a satisfactory agreement about the use of weapons of mass destruction. It is difficult to imagine, I defy anybody to imagine, how, if any of these six conditions were lacking, there would be a sense of confidence anywhere in the world.

The ultimate spiritual significance perhaps of the United Nations so far as the Western world is concerned is to compel this world, faced constantly as it is by the challenge of Communism and the challenge of the East, to fall back upon its own spiritual resources. There must be an original conviction and regeneration of the spirit expressing itself in the policies of governments and in the attitude and tone of their representatives. Because of its derivative character, the United Nations cannot provide this spiritual regeneration.

Am I to be told that the world which at its best has assigned infinite worth to the individual human soul; which has not fundamentally repudiated reason and the possibility of objective truth; which has a wonderful living deposit in the theory and practice of the arts; which has not broken away with its continuous, cumulative history; in which the university and the church are free each to obey its own principle; in which the transcendent is still worshipped not as a distant ideal but as a living God; and whose deepest vision is faith, hope and love: am I to be told that a world so burdened and so determined cannot yet awaken in order to develop the necessary universal material, social, intellectual and spiritual message which will enable it to save both itself and the rest of the world? I believe no such thing.

Philosophy and the Life of the Spirit

THEODORE M. GREENE

I. AN AGE OF PARADOX



OURS IS AN AGE OF paradox. It seems impossible to describe it save in terms of contradictory opposites. On the one hand, the now familiar charge that we are "hollow men", half-alive in a "wasteland" of spiritual aridity, seems amply justified. Yet, in apparent opposition to this view, violent beliefs are sweeping through our own land and other lands in a mounting wave of irrationalism. How can an age of hollow men be an age of such fervid affirmations?

Or again, ours is an age of unparalleled achievement in many areas—above all, of course, in science and technology, but also, and no less significantly, in the fine arts, in education, in social justice, and in political experience. Man's age-old wish for long life and prosperity seems, at least in our own land, to be more generously granted to more people than ever before in human history. Yet, as W. H. Auden has so eloquently reminded us, ours is also an age of profound anxiety and fear. These fears are not merely the perennial fears of mankind—of hunger and starvation, of disease and war and sudden death. They are, above all, the subtle fears which reflect our great inner spiritual insecurity—the fear of not being loved, or wanted, or respected; the fear that our individual lives will be empty and that all human life may turn out to be meaningless and purposeless. Never has life been longer, safer, and more comfortable for the vast majority of our fellow citizens; yet seldom, in our own short history, have we viewed life with less confidence or more profound perturbation.

Or, once again, ours is an age of miraculously efficient travel and communication. We can circle the globe in a matter of hours and converse by telephone with people at the antipodes. Radio and television enable us to keep in touch with current events in a manner undreamt of fifty years ago. The most secluded farm is no longer isolated, the most distant outpost no longer cut off. Many of us, moreover, live in urban or suburban areas with people all around us. Yet this is the age in which a widely read book by a sociologist is aptly entitled "The Lonely Crowd". We urbanites and suburbanites are experiencing a loneliness unknown to most of our ancestors on isolated farms and in distant lands. Hence the paradox of our spiritual isolation, with people all around us and in touch with us, our tragic solitude in the very midst of human bustle and laughter.

II. HOW INTERPRET THESE PARADOXES?

How shall we interpret this multiple paradox of our age and of ourselves as empty yet passionate, secure yet unassured, prosperous yet impoverished, to—

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gether yet alone? Spengler, some years ago, had an easy answer. It is, he said, our fate to be living at the end of a dying culture; these are the symptoms of advanced cultural senility. More recently Toynbee has repeated this depressing analysis, but in a more optimistic context. His survey of the sequence of human cultures has led him to conclude that our age may well be not only the end of one culture but the beginning of another. If this guess is valid, we can interpret the distinguishing characteristics of our age in a more hopeful way—namely, as the traumatic struggles of a cultural re-birth and as the natural anxieties of cultural infancy. It may be that the life of the spirit is having to endure not only the throes of cultural dissolution but also the pangs of cultural re-birth? We may be the half-blind witnesses of, the half-conscious participants in, a crucial act in the continuing drama of history—an act in which spirit is once again struggling to be re-born on earth.

It is fashionable today to view all human problems "existentially", that is, in terms of the pulls and pressures, the hopes and fears, of poignant and personal experience. In this existentialist perspective there is much in our shared and our private experiences to support Toynbee's optimistic historical hypothesis. Life does feel to many of us much of the time the way it might feel if we were in fact perched precariously on one of the great watersheds of human history. We feel, welling up irresistibly within ourselves, hopes and expectations *despite* our many fears. We cannot wholly stifle our impulse to believe that life must have some meaning for ourselves and our fellows *despite* all threats of meaninglessness and all actual emptiness. We cannot help feeling that, somehow, peace *ought* to be possible and war avoidable; that, somehow, all our accumulated knowledge and skill *ought* to be used constructively, for human welfare, and not destructively, in fratricidal hatred; that, somehow, there *must* be some way in which we can preserve our own national and spiritual integrity while yet honoring the integrity of others. We feel, deep within ourselves, that life can and should be vastly better, for ourselves and for others, than in fact it is. Is not this the way we might well feel if we were living in an age of spiritual renaissance, of radical spiritual transformation or rebirth?

There is, of course, no possible way of proving or disproving this historical hypothesis. We must await the verdict of history itself—and that means so long a wait that, as Eliot has put it, we, the patients, will no longer be there. We can, however, ask ourselves this question: *Assuming* the truth of Toynbee's reading of history, what can we do to hasten the rebirth and to safeguard the growth of the living spirit in our times? And, more specifically, what, if anything, can philosophy do today in the role of spiritual midwife and nurse?

III. THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY

I shall be dealing with the first of these two questions throughout my lecture. My own answer to the second question must, I suppose, be prejudiced because

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I am a professional philosopher who takes sides in current philosophical controversies. As I see it, philosophy has an essential, though a limited, role in every culture and epoch, and especially in our own. For our immediate cultural predicament has been largely brought about by cleavages, isolations, and lonelines which are so tragic partly because they are so stupid and so unnecessary. Our most urgent need today is for bridges across these cleavages and chasms, for bonds of community by which we can shatter our isolation and escape our loneliness. We are bedeviled by fanatical either/or's which can be exorcized only by powerful and healing both/and's. Our age is indeed the first atomic age in history; we can destroy mankind today with unprecedented ease. But more crucial, humanly and spiritually, is our cultural "atomicity", that is, the specializations, the segregations, the provincialisms which threaten us on every hand—internationally and nationally, politically and socially, culturally and religiously, publicly and privately. Hence our *most* pressing need today is for whatever will help us to achieve genuine communion in authentic communities, to transcend the chatter of the crowds and to rise to that level of mutual understanding and respect at which alone we can be persons in the company of other persons.

Can philosophy help us towards this goal? Our answer will be Yes, or No, depending upon how we conceive of the genius and task of philosophy. No, if by philosophy we mean a timid rationalistic venture intent only on absolute conceptual precision and clarity—a venture in essence analytic rather than synthetic, positivistic rather than speculative, technical rather than cultural and spiritual. Philosophy, so conceived and practised, has, I must confess, little to contribute to the healing of the nations; indeed, this kind of philosophy is, in my opinion, but one of the many symptoms of our prevalent cultural disease.

But philosophy can also be conceived of and practised, even today, in its more traditional role of bridge of chasms, healer of wounds, mediator and synthesizer. At its creative best philosophy has always used the language of both/and rather than either/or. Witness Plato's great reconciliation of Heraclitean flux and Parmenidean permanence, or Aristotle's partial resolution of Plato's awkward dualisms, or the Thomistic synthesis of Aristotelian reason and Christian faith, or Kant's great defence of *both* science and morality, or Whitehead's masterly synthesis of science and culture, religion and philosophy. This, I submit, has been philosophy's major role in our Western Culture—the Irenic role of imaginative interpreter, of bold reconciler, of tolerant peacemaker. Its genius has *not* been that of science, to make new specific discoveries: or of art, to express poignant intuitive insights in the language of beauty; or of government, to legislate and administer; or of business, to minister to our practical needs; or of religion, to provide us with ultimate spiritual light and power. We must be careful, as most of the great philosophers have been, to be modest in our claims of what philosophy can do, even at its powerful best. But, in all caution and humility, we can insist that philosophy *alone*, in its humane, synthetic role, can give mankind what it so

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desperately needs today, that is, the wider perspectives which are the only possible correctives for the multiple provincialisms which, in combination, are a major source of our misery.

I hardly need enumerate these provincialisms—national and regional, political and social, professional and cultural, secular and religious. All of us are forever stressing the “here and now” at the expense of the “there and then”, “my” interests in opposition to “yours”, “our” interests in disregard of “theirs”. We are perpetually selling our birth-right for a mess of pottage, jeopardizing long-range security for immediate comfort, neglecting enduring satisfactions for present pleasures. We are chronically imprudent, incapable even of consistently intelligent selfishness. Our multiple provincialisms also blind us, tragically, to the needs and rights of others and to the limits of our own righteousness. We are unnecessarily callous in the face of human suffering, culpably indifferent to human aspirations, and inexcusably self-righteous. These very human traits do not, of course, endear us to others, nor do they endear others to us. Hence the dissensions and stupidities, the tensions, local, national, and international, the wars and the threats of war, of our immediate present and our foreseeable future.

It would of course be utopian to believe that philosophy as a formal discipline can single-handed correct all these provincialisms and cure mankind of its perennial ills. Indeed, I must accept the Christian verdict that it is utopian to suppose that men will ever be free of these bedeviling provincialisms, ever able to live in complete mutual respect, harmony, and peace. But I am also convinced that utopian optimism and defeatist pessimism are not our only options. I do believe that our human lot can be improved indefinitely by our own efforts if only we go about it with enough energy, intelligence, and wisdom. I also believe that bold creative philosophical thinking is absolutely essential to this venture. The lectures you have already heard in this series, by Messrs. Pollard, Malik and McKay have, I understand, explored some of the scientific, political, and religious dimensions of our common problem. I shall devote the rest of this lecture to a brief analysis of three of the most harmful and unnecessary tensions of our times in the area of ultimate human belief, and to a consideration of the ways in which each of these tensions might, at least in principle, be overcome or at least lessened with the help of the right kind of philosophical mediation.

Each of these tensions is the source today of bitter controversy and hostility. This is because there is so much validity on *both* sides; the competing values are in each case real and important and their champions are justified in defending them with conviction. Tensions of this type cannot be relieved, therefore, by canceling out one factor. They can be eased only by being transcended in such a way as to honor both sides, preserve both sets of values, and reconcile them at some higher and more inclusive level. The values in question will in no case be the product of

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philosophy. But only a philosophical temper and discipline can, I believe, resolve these tensions in a creative manner.

IV. THREE CONTEMPORARY TENSIONS AND THEIR RESOLUTION

(a) RATIONALISM, IRRATIONALISM, AND SUPER-RATIONALISM

The first tension to which I would call your attention has its historical roots deep in our culture and its current manifestations are evident throughout our nation and, indeed, throughout the world. I refer to the conflict between rationalism and irrationalism.

By "rationalism" I mean the disposition to rely on human reason so exclusively that whatever transcends our rational comprehension is automatically ignored or denied. Rationalism, so defined, is a narrow and arrogant intellectualism. It was the acceptance of this intellectualistic dogma which gave the 18th century the characteristics which impel us today to refer to it, both in eulogy and in criticism, as an "Age of Reason". Eighteenth century rationalism did much, as Whitehead has reminded us, to promote intellectual clarity and power; but it also generated utopian hopes, it encouraged intellectual complacency, and it hindered, rather than hastened, the flowering of the 19th century imagination. It contributed greatly to modern science, but it also gave rise to scientism at its arrogant worst.

Today is hardly the time, however, to beat the nearly dead horse of rationalism, for we are now in the throes of its extreme opposite, a virulent and dangerous irrationalism. If the title of Immanuel Kant's treatise on religion, "Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone", be taken as the slogan of rationalism, Kierkegaard's "belief in the absurd" can serve as the corresponding slogan of extreme irrationalism. Such irrationalism is, in part, a laudable and necessary reaction against a narrow, desiccated, and dogmatic intellectualism. But it is dangerous because of its systematic distrust of reason and its uncritical acceptance of the irrational as such. We can observe this tendency in contemporary "existentialist" philosophy and literature, notably in the writings of Sartre. We can see it in the irrationalism of the theology of Karl Barth; we cannot avoid its political manifestations throughout our own land and around the globe—wherever, in fact, the spirit of fascism raises its ugly head.

What is new and urgent in all this is not the upsurge of passionate and uncritical belief. Men have believed irrationally and violently since the beginning of human history. What is new and worthy of our special notice is the widespread conviction today that man is essentially irrational and that the only way to appeal to him successfully is by irrational means, that is, by propaganda. This seems to be a favorite major premise not only of big business—witness high pressure advertising and lobbying—but of contemporary politics—witness the prevalent cynicism regarding the intelligence of the average voter. It is also, all too often, the major premise of both the defenders and the opponents of religious faith—witness the marked tendency to *define* such faith as faith in the miraculous and the

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absurd, and the disposition of the faithful to embrace it, and the faithless to repudiate it, for the *same* basic reasons. In short, we are living in an age in which reasonableness is selling at a discount. We all find it hard to believe that a reasonable solution of our international tensions can prevail, or that a reasonable political program can secure the support of the voter, or that reasonable advertising can suffice to assure a reasonable sale of goods, or that a reasonable way of life is possible to most men, or that a reasonable faith in God is possible at all.

I cannot pause to analyse in detail this ominous state of affairs, nor have I the time to develop what I believe to be its proper solution. But I must record my profound conviction that there is a solution available to mankind—a solution, moreover, which is not so esoteric as to be available only to the favored few but which, in principle, is within the reach of all thoughtful men and women of normal intelligence and a modicum of education. The solution is simply this: that reality, wherever and however we encounter it, *both* conforms to *and* transcends human reason.

What, for example, is the testimony of every advancing science? Is it not that, on the one hand, there seems to be no limit to the orderliness of nature which human reason can discover and formulate with precision, but that, on the other hand, nature itself, in all its orderly complexity, remains as mysterious as ever to the scientist who has true scientific imagination and humility? Are what we used to call "matter" and what we still call "life" any less ultimately mysterious and wonderful to the wise scientist than they were 100 years ago? Have modern psychology and psycho-analysis in any way lessened the ultimate mystery and value of the human psyche? We have indeed made fantastic progress in our rational understanding of nature and human nature, but the finite realities we have been studying so successfully elude, and give promise of always eluding, our complete rational comprehension. Yet this does not make them irrational or absurd—they are rather supra-rational, transcending but not violating our human reason.

We can and should, I believe, approach religion in this same spirit and with a similar expectation. A wholly unknown and unknowable God cannot be worshipped; He cannot even profitably be argued about. Those theologians who today are stressing God's otherness rather than His availability to man as righteous and redemptive Love are making it very difficult for man to worship God and serve Him in spirit and in truth. But there is no need to plunge to the opposite rationalistic extreme of denying God's mysterious depths and of insisting dogmatically that God must submit entirely to our finite rational comprehension. Surely it is the middle road of reflective humility which should recommend itself to thoughtful men and women of natural piety—the road which St. Paul described when he said that now we see, but only through a glass, darkly. This is the road of genuine apprehension but inadequate comprehension. On this road God reveals Himself to us, actually, authentically, and intelligibly, as the true Goal of our highest aspirations, the true Source of whatever spiritual light and power is available to us. But

what His full nature is in all its infinite depths we do not and cannot know, nor can we ever know the ultimate why and wherefore of His Divine Plan. Thus to acknowledge our finite human limitations is *not* to repudiate reason and to lapse back into irrationalism; it is rather to trust reason's ability to recognize its own limitations in the presence of objective mystery. Why, after all, should not the finite apprehend and revere the transfinite? Why should reason be unable to assess its own powers and acknowledge the reality and the mystery of what it has not created and what it can only partially comprehend?

This, I submit, is the sensible attitude of many thoughtful people today. Only the privileged few have the time and the ability to chart this Irenic middle road with theological and philosophical sophistication. But the less sophisticated can, and sometimes do, travel this same road, many of them with greater assurance and joy than the more erudite. Whitehead, you will recall, was sharp in his censure of a narrow intellectualism:

"Intellectual activity," he said, "is apt to flourish at the expense of Wisdom . . . Wisdom is persistent pursuit of the deeper understanding, ever confronting intellectual system with the importance of its omissions . . . The fallacy of intelligent people, clear-headed and narrow-visioned, has precipitated many catastrophes."

(*Adventures of Ideas*, p. 60)

Even more notable, however, was Whitehead's faith that real wisdom need not elude the common man.

"I hazard the prophecy," he wrote in the *Adventures of Ideas* (p. 41), "that that religion will conquer which can render clear to popular understanding some eternal greatness incarnate in the passage of temporal fact."

Note his words, "render clear to popular *understanding*". It is to the mind as well as to the heart, Whitehead rightly believed, that religion must address itself if it is to prevail; and, what is more, it must speak to the heart and the mind of the common man, to the "*popular understanding*". But is this so strange? Have not all the Founders of religion and all the great Reformers, both East and West, addressed themselves to the "*popular understanding*"? Has not the slow victory of "persuasion" over "force" transpired in the hearts and minds of ordinary folk? Are they less capable than the intelligensia of awe and reverence in the presence of "some eternal greatness incarnate in the passage of temporal fact"?

I have stressed the proper role, and the proper limits, of reason in the area of religious faith because it is here that the clash between rationalism and irrationalism is most vital and dramatic. But this clash is no less violent in other areas and no less disastrous to mutual understanding and cooperative action. The formulae of mediation must, of course, be changed as we turn from the family to the civic community, from industry to art, from education to politics. What I am pleading for in *all* these areas is reflective commitment—*not* for reliance on reason alone, and *not* for a repudiation or suspicion of reason, but rather for dependence on reason as far as it will carry us coupled with real humility in the face of what our human reason cannot encompass. It is deplorable that reason and faith have, in our Western tradition, been so often conceived of as opposites, as though either were

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possible without the other, and as though life could continue without both. Completely blind faith is a psychological impossibility; but reason cannot function save in the indemonstrable faith that we are living in an orderly universe, and life itself becomes impossible without a modicum of faith. The crucial question is therefore, How reasonable *and* assured can we make the faith we live by? How successfully can we *apprehend and accept* some "eternal" and "incarnate" "greatness" as our goal and our redemption? How consistently can we travel the middle road of reasonable supra-rationalism?

(b) ABSOLUTISM, RELATIVISM, AND INCARNATIONALISM

A modern Plato might well refer to a second major tension of our times as a hydra-headed monster because it manifests itself in so many different forms and guises. In its generic essence it is the old tension between the Absolute and the relative—a tension to which men have responded through the ages in three types of ways—in the way of flux, wherein the Absolute is ignored or denied; or in the way of permanence, wherein man, despite his own immersion in the flux, strives to rise above it either in mystic union with the Absolute or in certain and authoritative knowledge of it; or, finally, in what I shall call the way of imminence, where the effort is made to acknowledge the reality of both flux and permanence and to explore, with wonder and joy, the ingression of permanence in flux, the incarnation of the Absolute in the relative.

Each of these three large possibilities can, as I have said, be formulated from a variety of perspectives. For example, one can state the problem in non-religious and non-value terms as the problem of the temporal and the timeless, the changing and the changeless. It was predominantly, but not wholly, thus that Plato inherited the problem from Heraclitus and Parmenides. Or one can inject the factor of values and consider the relation of eternal and changeless Values to the shifting and changing values of our human experience. It was chiefly the Sophists and Socrates who, in our culture, crystallized the problem in these value terms. Or, again one can give the problem a religious slant by identifying the permanent with Deity and the temporal with His creation, and then inquire into the ways, if any, in which God is operative in nature and manifest to finite man in the temporal process. [We can also formulate the problem with primary emphasis on ontology, that is, on the reality of the changing and the permanent, and the imminence of the latter in the former; or with primary emphasis on epistemology, that is, on the nature and implications of our human knowledge; or again with a primary axiological concern for value—for the Good, the Beautiful, and in a religious context, the Holy.]

I suppose that there are in every historical epoch of every culture those whose *penchant* is for the relative and who, with John Dewey, deplore man's eager quest for certainty and his hunger for the Absolute. It seems likely, moreover, that the relativists and the absolutists, in conjunction, always greatly outnumber the immanentists, that is, those who persist in believing that *both* permanence and change, *both* fact and value, *both* the finite and the Infinite, are real and somehow

significantly related to each other. It seems clear, finally, that some historical epochs as a whole exhibit a major trend in the direction of relativism, others, of absolutism, and that our own period has, at least until very recently, been a strongly relativistic period. Witness the many proponents today of a more or less extreme relativism in academic circles; witness also the widespread transvaluation of values in our society since the Victorian period and the general acceptance by the unsophisticated of a relativism of values.

What should deeply concern us meanwhile is the unhealthy effect upon the life of the spirit of *both* absolutism and relativism in their extreme forms. Relativism, pushed to the limit, degenerates into sheer nihilism. Not only do the very concepts of time and change become meaningless when radically divorced from all constants, from all "eternal objects" and all permanence; values lose their value if they are dissolved without remainder in the river of change. In the perspective of religion, if Flux is King there is no Deity worthy of our worship; as Eliot puts it, if time is all there is, time is unredeemable. For example, what happens to man's scientific search or philosophical quest if all his thinking is *merely* culturally conditioned, if all reasoning is *mere* rationalizing, if man is *radically* incapable of apprehending reality more or less validly or truthfully? What happens to man's sense of moral obligation if he becomes convinced that all moral values are *merely* social conventions and cultural mores which, in principle, lack all validity or objective reference? What, finally, happens to honest and intelligent piety if the very possibility of religious insight, of Revelation, and of communion with Deity is *a priori* denied? It is true that many relativists fail to explore the implications of their own relativism or to express this relativism in their overt behavior. It is also true that a predominantly relativistic age will continue for some generations to echo the non-relativistic beliefs of an earlier period. The inertia of patterns of belief and behavior is considerable—at times, mercifully so. But the seeds of nihilism, once sown, are bound sooner or later to take root and grow in a manner highly prejudicial to human welfare.

The cure of nihilism is not, however, to be found in absolutism, for absolutism, in its extreme forms, is no less harmful to the human spirit. If the final product of relativism is soul-destroying doubt, that of absolutism is soul-corroding certainty. Relativism denies the Absolute by relativizing it; absolutism reverses this process and absolutizes the relative. The besetting sin of the absolutist is the idolatrous insistence that certain human apprehensions and formulations of the Absolute—his own, or those of whatever institution he endows with absolute authority—are themselves absolute. Hence his affirmative dogmatism, so similar in temper to the negative dogmatism of the radical sceptic; hence his authoritarianism, which purports to express humility but which so often arrays itself in the trappings of spiritual arrogance. The logical fallacy of absolutism is, if I may misquote Whitehead, the fallacy of misplaced absoluteness; it is the tempting but avoidable fallacy of ascribing to man's finite apprehensions of the Absolute some of the attributes of absolute perfection. This fallacy, translated into religious

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terms, becomes the supreme sin of the spirit—the sin of confusing means and End, of idolatrously worshipping book or church, creed or rite, in place of God Himself. Who can rehearse all the self-righteousness and all the cruel persecutions which this authoritarian spirit, secular and religious, has inflicted on mankind through all the centuries and in every culture?

We need not waste our time discussing whether absolutism or relativism is the greater threat to the life of the spirit. We can leave it to the pot and the kettle to call each other black; both charges will be valid. Our predicament would indeed be desperate if these were our only options. But they are not; indeed, it is not only possible but spiritually imperative to recognize *both* the relative and the Absolute, *both* change and permanence, *both* God and His finite creation of which we are a part. On this view the Absolute alone is absolute and, as such, it is that by reference to which all finite knowledge, all human achievement, is of necessity partial and relative.

This mediating position can, if one is so inclined, be stated in purely naturalistic terms, namely, that nature alone is absolutely what it is and that our scientific knowledge, though authentic and constantly improving, is, *by definition*, finite and fallible. Or, one can state it in more humanistic terms, namely, that it is man's destiny ever to approximate to perfect Truth, Beauty, and Justice but, *by definition*, never wholly to encompass them. Or, finally, we can restate this Irenic faith in the theological language of some great religion—for example, in terms of the Christian concept of God as perfect righteous Love, as Self-revealing, and as Incarnate; in terms of the Christian concept of man as sinner, though created in the image of God and perpetually open to His grace; and in terms of the Christian concept of a Sacramental universe, created by God as the scene of His redemptive labors.

Once again, I cannot pause to expound this mediating position in its countless variants or to argue its cogency. I can merely remind you that the great cultural traditions of mankind, both East and West and both secular and religious, have, at their spiritual best, tended away from both extremes of nihilistic relativism and authoritarian absolutism towards this middle road of man's finite quest for the Infinite—a quest which has been confident but cautious, assured but humble, ever mindful of the inescapable limits of *all* finitude, however sanctified, yet never sceptical of whatever Absolute does in fact give meaning and purpose to human life.

It is my plea, then, that the life of the spirit can best be fostered in ourselves and others by travelling this middle road as our own minds and consciences dictate, and by cultivating an affirmative tolerance and respect for all those who, in their different ways, are struggling as hard as we are to find and follow this same middle road of spiritual sanity.

(c) THE RELIGIOUS, THE SECULAR, AND THE SPIRITUAL

A third major cleavage, certainly not new but tragically divisive in our own and other lands, is the cleavage between the secular and the religious—between

those who profess and those who repudiate a religious faith. When "religion" is wholly identified with the prescribed cult, creed, and conduct of some institutionalized religion, that is, of some church or synagogue, temple or mosque, the line between the religious and the non-religious or secular can of course be sharply and neatly drawn. It is the self-assured religious traditionalists and their no less self-assured irreligious antagonists who take pleasure in drawing this hard line between the sheep and the goats, the saved and the damned, or, from the secular perspective, the gullible and the sophisticated, the victims of illusion and the enlightened.

Once again, we must take care not to define away the problem by minimizing the validity and value of *both* sides. Man's religious aspirations, like all his other endeavors, *must* be institutionalized. They can flourish only in community, and community *means* a common past, shared beliefs, familiar rituals and symbols, co-operative action in loyalty to a common cause. Uninstitutionalized religion is as impossible as is uninstitutionalized family life, or uninstitutionalized education, or uninstitutionalized science, or government, or business. Hence the futility of supposing that a purified "religious attitude" can prevail in the hearts and minds of individuals who are wholly divorced from a religious tradition. All this and more must be said in support of the "religion of the churches".

But we must also grant the cogency of at least two secular protests—that the churches have often discouraged or perverted authentic spirituality, and that they have held no copyright on genuine spiritual concern and achievement. Both charges are too familiar to require recapitulation here. The worldliness, arrogance, and self-righteousness in all organized religion is notorious. No less undeniable is the genuine saintliness of some individuals outside the fold of any orthodox communion. In short, a strong case can certainly be made by both the defenders and the critics of organized religion.

What concerns us here, however, is the frequent similarity between the objectives of both parties and, in addition, between some of their crucial beliefs. I am going to risk the wrath of both sides by citing two well-known secularists whose lives and writings illustrate my point.

My first example is none other than John Dewey. I have no intention of distorting the record or of insulting him and his many devoted followers by any foolish claim that he was in fact a devout Christian. He was explicit and consistent in his attacks on what he called "religion" and "supernaturalism". He referred to himself as a "naturalist" and he has a full right to that label. He was also one of the great humanists of our century—a stalwart fighter for human rights and respecter of human dignity. His long life was dedicated to the promotion of human welfare as he conceived of it; this, indeed, to use his own preferred phrase, was his "religious attitude".

What I would stress in the present context is Dewey's insistence on our dependence, as men, upon what he constantly refers to as "nature" or "nature as a whole". If the word "God" were to be substituted for either term some of Dewey's

most memorable utterances would have a markedly religious ring.

"Our successes," he writes in *A Common Faith* (p. 25-6), "are dependent upon the cooperation of nature . . . Natural piety . . . may rest upon a just sense of nature as a whole of which we are parts . . . Such piety is an inherent constituent of a just perspective in life."

What is to me arresting in such passages as this is Dewey's denial of human self-sufficiency, his recognition of man's dependence on "nature", and, above all, his concern that "nature" be conceived of in such a way as to make man's dependence upon her not fatalistic slavery but humane freedom. Dewey's naturalism does indeed differ profoundly from an enlightened theism—but are they diametric opposites? Are they not facing in the same direction? Are they not both deeply and sincerely concerned with human welfare? Are not both expressive of a genuine reverence and piety? Must we, in short, draw the line between the religious and the irreligious so sharply that John Dewey, valiant humanist and pious naturalist, has to be pushed into the limbo of radical irreligion?

My second example is Dr. Erich Fromm, the author of several books, among them *Psychoanalysis and Religion*. He too, like Dewey, is explicitly critical of what he calls "authoritarian religion" and consistently in favor of what he calls "humanistic religion". God is, for him, nothing but a "symbol of man's own powers" (p. 37); "the problem of religion," he writes, "is not the problem of God but the problem of man" (p. 113). As a professing Christian I must, of course, take sharp issue with Dr. Fromm's self-sufficient humanism; indeed, I must accuse him, the outspoken critic of all idolatries, of being himself guilty of idolatry, that is, of the lofty idolatry of humanism—of putting man in the place of God and of absolutizing humanity. But—and this is the reason I have quoted Dr. Fromm—note how he too declares man to be dependent upon objective laws which are not man-made and which man must obey if he would prosper.

"There are," he writes (p. 74), "immutable laws inherent in human nature and human functioning which operate in any given culture. These laws cannot be violated without serious damage to the personality . . . The problem of mental health cannot be separated from the basic human problem, that of achieving the aims of human life: independence, integrity, and the ability to love."

Throughout his writings Dr. Fromm reiterates his unswerving loyalty to the three great objective values of "brotherly love, truth, and freedom", and he, like St. Paul, seems to believe that the greatest of these is love. Indeed, his account of the nature of true love is very similar to the Biblical account of love, except—and this is of course a tremendous exception—that, once again, he is consistently humanistic and anti-theistic in his conception of love's ultimate origin and nature. What man most needs, he says, is

"the ability to love productively, to love without greed, without submission or domination, to love from the fullness of his personality, just as God's love is a symbol for love out of strength and not out of weakness" (p. 87)

Here again we find an explicit repudiation of God as objectively real; here is no hint that we can love God and one another because God first loved us. It is essential that the profound difference between Fromm's humanism and all forms of authentic theism be not blurred or ignored. Yet, is not Dr. Fromm's complete

respect for man and his sincere loyalty to the *objective* laws of truth, freedom, and love a striking secular echo of the respect for man and truth, freedom and love, which we find in all the "higher" religions of mankind? In short, are not humanists like Dewey and Fromm as sincerely dedicated to spirituality as any professing Jews and Christians? Are they not our allies rather than our enemies? And is not our common goal and are not some of our shared beliefs *more* important than our admittedly important differences?

What I am obviously deploring is hostility between men of genuine good will and genuine humility in the presence of cosmic values, forces, and laws. What I am pleading for is a genuine tolerance for all types of sincere spirituality other than our own. Above all, I plead for a perspective in which the present conflict between the secular and the religious can be regarded as an aspect of that wider conflict which includes all the age-old rivalries of the great historic religions with one another. Let me try to indicate my assessment of all these rivalries in a philosophical parable.

Might not the peoples of mankind be conceived of as living, as it were, at the foot of a mighty mountain—a mountain shaped, let us suppose, like Fujiyama, but many times higher than Mt. Everest, so high, indeed, that its peak, like the Ultimate itself, is ever partly hidden from human sight. Mankind has, since men were first begotten, clustered around its base, some to the north, some to the south, and others east and west, each human culture with its privileged and limited perspective. To all in every culture the mountain has, we must believe, been both a challenge and a threat, but above all a lure, conscious or unconscious, powerful or weak. There have been those in every culture who have found this lure so irresistible that they have led their fellows slowly toward its slopes. Many have gone astray in the intervening swamps and jungles of superstition and have resigned themselves to the magic of primitive idolatries. A few stalwart individuals have lost their vision and have abandoned the upward quest; they have finally persuaded themselves that there is no mountain and that mankind is destined to live forever on an arid plain. But the more imaginative and stubborn have persisted, generation after generation, in the effort to surmount the initial foothills. With their followers, they have climbed higher and higher along converging trails. These spiritual explorers have all pressed on in faith—a faith which at first was nearly blind but which, as they gradually fought their way out of the deep forests and the enfolding valleys, was progressively justified by ever widening vistas, ever purer air. The higher they climbed, the more were they convinced that theirs was no futile effort, no meaningless quest. With each new step their strength increased, their vision clarified, and they experienced new joy and peace—a joy and peace beyond the comprehension of those who never ventured on the quest, or who got lost at the mountain's base, or who deliberately gave up trying.

At this point our mountain-climbing metaphor can easily seduce us into a grave falsification of the historical record. It would be pleasant to report that all these climbers, fully aware that none had ever actually reached the summit, were

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impelled to acknowledge that all alike must accept the risks of faith, each individual and group confident and hopeful that his trail would in fact lead ever upward to the shrouded peak; that all were therefore charitable towards those who, for whatever reason, were climbing upward along some other path; and that all realized that the higher each group climbed, the closer they came not only to the mysterious summit but also to one another. Such a report would truthfully describe the attitude of the saintly few in each of the higher religions. But a wholly accurate account of all the climbers on every slope would have to report that most of them became arrogant in their mountaineering claims, dogmatic in their assurance that theirs was the one and only upward path, contemptuous and intolerant of their fellow climbers on other slopes. Here we have the irony and the tragedy of man's perennial spiritual venture—a venture which, above all others, one would suppose, would instill humility, good will, and tolerance.

I need not spell out the moral of my mountaineering parable. The point I have wished to emphasize is surely clear—that man's search for what most men call "God," that the unfolding life of the spirit, can only authenticate itself in an ever more poignant sense of human finitude, in an ever deepening humility, in genuine tolerance, respect and charity for all other ventures and venturers, however mistaken they may seem to be. In this perspective differences do *not* disappear or become unimportant; they may well be crucially important. In this perspective the need for faith persists, even when blind faith is gradually transformed into the radiant faith of increasing enlightenment, power, and joy. In this perspective vital decisions must still be made, Revelations must still be received, tested, and accepted or rejected, risks must still be taken, for better or for worse. But, in this perspective, men will hold this faith and make these decisions and take these risks not smugly or arrogantly but with contrite hearts and an ultimate concern for all their fellow travelers.

V. CONCLUSION

I fear that some of you may be gravely disappointed with what I have had to say. For I have done little more than plead for a sadly outmoded cause, the cause that once bore the honored name of liberalism. My plea has been for reflective commitment in place of both unreflective certainty and of reflective doubt; for faith, not blind faith, and not faith proved to the hilt, but faith rooted in experience and tested, so far as possible, by rational analysis and speculation; for a tolerance born of humility rather than contemptuous intolerance and rather than the no less contemptuous tolerance of indifference. Spirit can live and grow strong, I am persuaded, only in those who have the courage to venture all in man's eternal search for objective Truth and Beauty, Justice and Holiness. But woe be to those whose search beguiles them into the worship of lesser gods, into the multiple idolatries which are in essence divisive and ultimately destructive of the spiritual life.

The paradoxes of our ages all testify to man's befuddled groping towards

the mountain peak which is our spiritual home. We are "hollow men" in proportion as we lose ourselves completely in the flux, "distracted from distraction by distraction", "men and bits of paper, whirled by the cold wind", "in this twittering world". It is because we cannot endure this hollowness, this empty life without faith or purpose, that we erect our golden calves and worship our man-made idols with such fanatical fervor. We have prospered mightily in the things of this world, but all our possessions have left us impoverished and fearful because man can indeed not live by bread alone. We have perfected countless ways of communicating with one another but we have lost the art of significant communion because we have failed to cultivate the bases of community, namely, a common spiritual heritage, a common loyalty to a Spirit greater than ourselves. Our tragic schisms are both the effect and a powerful contributory cause of our spiritual impoverishment.

It was the absence, or the loss, of spiritual anchorage which initiated man's quest for rational certainty in the 17th century. As faith in God weakened, man naturally turned to reason for comparable assurance. Since man must live by faith, men transferred their earlier faith in God to science and philosophy. This transfer seemed at first to be eminently satisfactory, but it became clear in time that man cannot even live by reason alone. Hence the swing of the pendulum in our times to the opposite extreme of irrationalism—an irrationalism very different from the reflective religious faith of earlier centuries. Hence, therefore, the present-day clash between an untenable intellectualism and an intolerable irrationalism, and the resultant need for the re-discovery of the middle road of reflective commitment. Let us not underrate the difficulty of finding and following this middle road. Lewis Mumford's recent assessment in the *New Republic* is correct.

The narrow path, the path of discipline, order, rationality, discrimination, the path of mature and loving emotional development, fruitful and creative in every occasion it embraces, has become ever narrower, and the effort to follow its upward course has become lonelier and lonelier. ("Irrational Elements in Art and Politics" in *The New Republic*, April 5, 1954, p. 17.)

A similar explanation of the contemporary tension between absolutism and relativism is forthcoming. It is, in the last analysis, a profound spiritual anxiety that has impelled believers in an objective Absolute to absolutize their apprehensions of it and to indulge in pious and impious idolatries. The worst enemies of faith in God and in objective Values have been those whose defense of this faith has degenerated into institutional and private dogmatism. Their idolatrous absolutism has encouraged the relativists, in turn, to absolutize the flux and to reduce all reality and all knowledge to the phantasmagoria of endless, meaningless change. Once again, the obvious but difficult resolution of this tension between these partially valid but extreme positions involves both discrimination and synthesis—discrimination between the Absolute and the relative, and their synthesis in a pregnant doctrine of immanence and Incarnation. This is still our only Good News, our only Gospel of salvation.

The current dichotomy between the religious and the secular is the inevitable product of the evolution of Western culture since the Middle Ages, the result of divorcing faith and reason, religion and culture. Our only hope of resolving this bitter conflict which condemns religion to arbitrariness and fanaticism, culture to spiritual impoverishment, is resolutely to reunite man's two great concerns—his concern for his cultural life on earth, and his concern for the abiding and the spiritually Ultimate. Paul Tillich points us in the right direction when he declares that "religion", properly conceived, "is the substance of culture, culture the form of religion" (from an address at Yale in 1952). We can hope to revitalize our religious faith and dignify our secular pursuits only by relating them in a common, whole-hearted, cooperative venture, animated through and through with a spirit of tolerance rooted in humility and trust.

Can philosophy aid us in this, our mortal predicament? It certainly can not save us single-handed. It is too general, too abstract, and too purely speculative to provide the dynamism, the strength for vital decision, the "ultimate concern for the Ultimate", to use Tillich's phrase, which are essential for the good life. Nothing can take the place of authentic religious dedication—of genuine religious response to the self-revelation of Spirit. We cannot, I am persuaded, save ourselves entirely by our own efforts, despite the "larger whole". We must be redeemed, day by day, in every generation and every culture, by redemptive cosmic forces not of our own making yet available to us in countless culturally conditioned ways. But we shall not be redeemed by passivity and sloth. Ours must be the alert and responsive passivity heralded by the mystics. We shall not be redeemed by irrational passion and blind fervid faith. We must use the minds God has given us not only to apprehend Deity but, so far as possible, to comprehend His nature¹. Finally, we shall certainly not be redeemed by bigotry, intolerance, and self-righteousness. Only in humility and mutual respect can we keep ourselves open to whatever "eternal greatness" may in fact be "incarnate" in our very midst. Only thus can we help one another in community and in communion of spirit with Spirit.

In a word, philosophy is the unique and irreplaceable humane discipline of man's spiritual quest. Without philosophy all loyalties, however lofty and however spiritual, are doomed to provincialism and divisive intolerance. Without philosophy, dogma can only breed dogmatism; the church, ecclesiasticism; reliance on Scripture, Biblicism; ritual, ritualism; faith, fanaticism. Philosophy at its powerful best is, I am utterly persuaded, the *only* corrective for all these spirit-destroying *isms*. Without its purging discipline and enlightening vision the life of the spirit must destroy itself in unbridled, suicidal excess. Philosophy is, now as ever, the essential partner of religion in man's perennial spiritual pilgrimage.

¹To quote Whitehead once again, "The Task of Theology is to show how the World is founded on something beyond mere transient fact, and how it issues in something beyond the perishing of occasions." (*Adventure of Ideas*, p. 221). ..

The Intellectual Crisis of the Colleges

CURTIS W. R. LARSON

I.



COLLEGE IS A COMMUNITY of the inquisitive. It exists because we human beings are ineluctably curious; we have questions, or, more properly, questions have us. These questions are manifold and endless. Nevertheless, they appear to be the parts of three main concerns: Where are we? Who are we? How should we live? The basic activity of any department of the college is a wrestle with these big questions.

The physicist, for example, wishes to know the nature of nature (nature being his word for "whatever there is"). Whether he uses mathematical symbols, words or pictures, he is trying to say where we are. So too the work in sociology, government, history and religion is an effort to see and describe the context in which we find ourselves. This is the query which man's outward-turned senses raise first.

But sooner or later he discovers himself in the picture. Perhaps he has become confused about the meaning of his man-made symbols. For whatever reason, he discovers behind his astronomy the astronomer, behind his ritual the worshipper, behind the state the citizen. So he sets his psychologists, philosophers, biologists, artists and sociologists to work telling him who we are.

Finally, he realizes that choices lie before him. When shall he plant his corn? With whom shall he cohabit, if anyone? How shall he deal with his stubborn neighbor? How much of himself shall he invest in the possibility that life is more than meets his eye or instruments? "How shall we live?" he asks. Again he turns to his schools for answers, for descriptions of the way to good health, efficient and humane government, the rules of the cosmic game.

These nagging and delightful headaches provoke the foundation of the college. But a college is not just a catalog of questions. It is a community, more particularly, a community of persons at work on them. Possibly this organized search for answers arose because our ancestors discovered, as we do, that the problems are bigger than any individual who is capable of stating them. More probably they arose because man is a gossip. When he thinks he has found an answer, what does he do? He has to shout, "Eureka, I have it!" He cannot remain decently silent. And then he has to try to persuade others that he is on the right trail. Or perhaps one should say simply that the pursuit of answers is so thrilling that a man cannot keep it to himself.

Here is the root of the community. Men must talk with each other, have bull sessions, hold panel discussions, read papers. They must write dissertations

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contributing to the store of human knowledge, even if the contribution be a negative one and especially if the tyro can contradict his elders. This is scholarship, the heart of the college. It is the sign that the instructor is in the give and take of discussion without which the colleges die. For this reason certain college presidents are wont to speak of the "college family." What is a family if not a group of persons who share with each other?

So the community of the curious arises. It springs from double roots: from the fact that men find the pursuit of answers fascinating and from the fact that men like to share their enthusiasms. In short, it arises because men cannot prevent it—because they cannot evade questions and cannot keep secrets.

It is important to recognize that the health of this community appears not to rest upon man's finding absolutely certain answers. The human race has as great horror of certainty as of chaos. All the student asks is the privilege of continuing his explorations. Clear and final solutions would attenuate that possibility. Thus the college will thrive only so long as the student finds enough plausible clues to encourage him and to serve as the basis for new investigations.

The history of science in the western world is a case in point. No one abandons science just because each new answer begets three new questions. Neither do we distrust the scientists because they constantly disprove their forbears' hypotheses, theories and "assured results." Quite the reverse, we say to ourselves, "Our scientists are progressing!" All we ask, all the brother scientists ask is that the discarded hypothesis shall be supplanted by one promising to be more fruitful of opportunities for research. Thus James B. Conant, in attempting a definition of science, says,

As a first approximation, we may say that science emerges from the progressive activities of man to the extent that new concepts arise from experiments and observations, and the new concepts in turn lead to further experiments and observations . . . The test of a new idea is therefore not only its success in correlating the then-known facts but much more its success or failure in stimulating further experimentation or observation which in turn is fruitful. This dynamic quality of science viewed not as a practical undertaking but as a development of conceptual schemes seems to me to be close to the heart of the best definition. (*On Understanding Science*, "A Mentor Book." New American Library, 1947, 1951, p. 37.)

That it is logical of human beings to love this sort of enterprise surely is doubtful. Nonetheless, it is a distinctively human endeavor. Perhaps, after all, man does not ask much of life. But he does insist that he be allowed to explore his questions and then to question his answers. He has gone to the lengths of forming vast institutions thus to honor his curiosity.

II.

If it be granted that we have here a plausible *raison d'être* for the colleges, it is still obvious that the picture is in most general terms. From this sketch of a rationale one could hardly deduce the present forms of our colleges. Many intermediate forces have operated; but only one of them, an important one, need

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be noted now. It is the fact that men seem unable to cope with their three big questions as integers. Rather, men actually do their thinking about fragments of these large units and then only by means of statements which phrase these parts of the large problems *in terms of the knowledge of their particular time*.

As has been suggested, men have to experience at least the illusion of success to be happy in their search. Hence they select such fragments of the big questions as seem within the range of their own and their colleagues' competence. Again science—the most successful of modern man's intellectual enterprises—gives the clearest example. One of the axioms of science is that the scientists shall deal only with such areas as they reasonably can expect to keep manageable. Scientists place outside the range of science all those questions which offer too many variables for their control. For this very reason psychology has experienced such difficulty in entering the select fraternity. And in order to try to satisfy the established members of the club, the psychologists have turned to experiments on less complicated animals than man; they hope in this field to be able to set up properly rigorous controls (which term, incidentally, is most illuminating).

In addition, man has to be careful about how he frames his query. Anyone who has survived the writing of a Ph. D. dissertation knows what a racking and crucial task it is stating the problem to be investigated. He knows, as Goethe did, that if a jackass looks into a mirror, he cannot see an angel looking out. For this reason the intellectual likes the surely apocryphal story of Gertrude Stein's last words. She is said to have turned to a friend, breathing, "What is the answer?" And hearing no reply, she sighed, "Well, what is the question then?"

The inquiries which claim our interest are those which rest upon the knowledge of our time. Hence the importance of having the very last word in our textbooks; hence the sale of classics on the ground that they are relevant to all times. And on the other hand, we observe that the antiquarian who submerges himself in concerns of no discernible relevance to his time generally is held suspect. A man has to live in his own age; he cannot hold his own or his peers' respect if he does not. Likewise, his questions must spring from his situation, must reflect the most alert thinking and most reliable information available.

What happens if intellectuals violate this rule? First they become frustrated and their community sickens. For what is the point of re-doing problems once solved? What is the point of wrestling "carelessly resurrected" issues? Where is the thrill? Even the poorest student bridles eventually at lab manuals which require him to walk through well trod steps to hackneyed Q. E. D.'s. Away from the growing edge, the professor dwindles into apathy. Consequently it is impossible, even in the small college, to have a good teacher, who is not a scholar. It is cant to try to separate the two. And the instructor who is promised promotion on the basis of his teaching ability soon discovers that he can force promotion by getting his Ph. D. and by flooding the dean's office with reprints. Quite properly so.

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These are the best evidences that the classroom star of today will be a provocative professor tomorrow.

When the intellectual community becomes thus bored with obsolete problems, it finds means of distracting itself. The untapped ingenuity of students and faculty pours itself into specious substitutes, not the least of which is the frustrated-lover attack on ivory towerism.

Finally, the group declines in the eyes of the society which sustains it. The public and the "constituency" may not know precisely what is taking place within the ivy covered walls. But they still have a nose for boredom. Gradually they get out of the habit of supporting the community. Ultimately the stultified group is buried.

Why all of this emphasis on the perils of irrelevantly framed questions? Because there is good evidence that a staggering number of America's smaller colleges are reaping their vacuous fruit. Why else is it that so many of the younger faculty look upon their appointments as merely time-serving while awaiting a tap from a supposedly better school? Is this behavior to be facilely explained as just a matter of the financial squeeze? Is it, perhaps, boredom with curricula and their underlying questions that is the important root of the "silent generation" of apathetic students? Could it be that the current student and faculty generation scrambles for security—the fat pay check—just so that it can buy the means of distraction from its boredom? Might this boredom have sprung from a paucity of exciting intellectual ventures? And would there be a better way of inducing this boredom than by putting ourselves through the same fundamental paces that our grandfathers did?

If we are not spoiling for a good thinking bout, how else are we to account for our gargantuan sports programs, omnivorous fraternities, and an office for everyone? Having neutralized the demon thought, have we welcomed such an assortment of diversions as would make Barnum a piker?

On what other grounds can one better reconcile the growing prevalence of the bachelor's degree with the contempt or indifference in which the intellectual is held? Must we not suppose that the contagion has spread from the campuses to the homes, offices, shops, farms and legislative chambers of the nation? Aware only that the college is somehow stagnant, the public yawns at it. Thus it becomes possible for a public brightly to dismiss the intellectual as the egghead (the term originally being belched by a college graduate in a state where it is boasted that you cannot go twenty miles in any direction without meeting a campus). Thus is created a void which may be filled by Mickey Spillane and TV hucksters selling goods by means of chromium lies which no one believes— not the public, not the huckster, not his sponsor!

III.

Perhaps we have evidence permitting the suspicion that our communities

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of the inquisitive are foundering on irrelevant questions. Does a look at the questions themselves demand this conclusion? We are bound to wonder.

This essay is no place for a carefully controlled study of what questions are being argued by students and faculty in our smaller colleges. Neither would it be the place for reporting the details of such a study if it had been made. But some personal, yes, subjective impressions may be suggestive.

If the reader is a teacher in one of these colleges, suppose he perform a little experiment. Let him peruse the following pairs of concepts and then ask himself, "When I have witnessed or participated in inter-departmental discussions among faculty and students, how often have they rested upon these dichotomies as presuppositions?"

Idealism—materialism;
natural—supernatural;
creation—evolution;
absolutism—relativism;
body—soul;
determinism—free will;
man basically good—man basically evil;
objectivity—subjectivity;
emotion—reason;
faith—fact;
individualism—collectivism;
egoism—altruism.

If the reader's experience is anything like this writer's (based upon studying at one small college, teaching in three additional ones, speaking at a number more and talking with friends from many others), he will have found that by far the dominant part of our intellectual discussions, when there are any, hover about these issues. We tend to phrase our questions and array our evidence in terms of these and similar either/or's.

How suitable are these forms for asking the questions allowed or demanded by the current state of our knowledge. They are not suitable at all. Perhaps they were appropriate in a college at the end of the nineteenth century; not any more.

Consider, for example, the alternatives materialism—idealism. The opposition here, and hence the opportunity for debate, rests upon the notion of indestructibly hard grains of stuff called atoms which are considered the final constituents of what is called matter. From Democritus until the twentieth century there were those who considered this matter the critical word in describing our context. And for the same period there were the idealists who dissented. But the leaders of twentieth century science have abandoned that particular notion of matter in favor of that of behavior. Thus the previously formulated question has vanished.

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One can discuss it now only if one amputates a critical part of our body of knowledge.

Before the Freudian revolution it was a common and proper thing for scholars to oppose emotion and reason. But recent advances in psychology and medicine have obliterated the gulf that was supposed to separate the two. It is no longer possible for the careful student even to define them clearly. Another revered debate topic is obsolete.

One had a plausible contrast in objectivity—subjectivity when facts were viewed as independently existent. But when one takes serious account of man the observer-namer-organizer-interpreter, then it is difficult to show the line between objectivity and subjectivity. Finally we have begun to take man so seriously. The result is a growing consensus that every statement of "fact" rests upon assumptions in "faith." As a consequence we have the current fascination with philosophy of history and the redefinition of science along lines like those suggested by Conant. And the relevance of yet another question form dwindles.

One could go on. One could ask in detail how we are to continue to argue about the body—soul dichotomy in the face of the overwhelming abandonment of faculty psychologies. Or, where is the promise of exciting discourse about egoism—altruism since the discreteness of the individual is being gradually smudged? It is possible to show that each one of these dichotomies at some crucial point ignores the development of modern learning.

This means that in advance the forms of our questions commit us to frustrating discussion. One wears himself out by trying to squeeze the new shape of things into a nineteenth century corset.

And notice: the problem is not that we now have answers to all possible questions or even to the queries of our grandfathers. The difficulty is that our maps for exploration grossly distort the terrain to be covered. It is patent that more careful and more informed framing of the issues would promise us more interesting investigations. Thus we might reclaim the part of student and faculty interest which is going sour.

IV.

Of course, no steps in this direction are possible until we know how we got ourselves into this plight. At least six inter-locking reasons must be seen. (1) Obviously the cardinal fact is that man's store of knowledge has grown fantastically in the last century. Discovering the impossibility of being experts in all fields, we have tried to make ourselves specialists in one or another. But excessive specialization in the college community is insidious. For the specialist feels inadequate to speaking about issues raised in fields other than his own. So he remains silent about the matters which ought to be the basis for the intellectual community, the issues which cross departmental lines. Or if he does find himself insinuated into

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such conversation, he has to fall back upon the forms of issues when he last studied them. In either case the intellectual discourse of the college tends to miss the issues implicit in recent knowledge.

(2) As the colleges have been flooded with students, the intellectual qualifications of them have reached steadily lower common denominators. Even if these students were not being pigeon-holed into specialties, there would have been growing numbers of them who would not learn fast enough or thoroughly enough to get to the point of seeing the new questions, much less debating them. As it is, mobs of students graduate with the most perfunctory exposure to thinking.

(3) Inevitably the faculties, increasingly confused about the nature of their tasks, have been frightened by glimpses of themselves in the impractical pose of exploring for curiosity's sake. Consequently, they have found all sorts of "practical material and spiritual values" to be gained from college. These supposedly practical ends have usurped more and more status. And the essential motive back of the community of the inquisitive—that of following the question wherever it leads, even across specialists' boundaries or into impractical dabbling—has shriveled from lack of exercise.

(4) At the same time these bewildered faculties heard reverberations of Dewey's impact on the public schools. But Dewey's proper stress on the importance of the student's interest was easily garbled under the influence of our salesman's culture. Too often the result was a college policy that the student-customer is always right. But the student comes to college with the question forms of the previous generation. So one starts where student interest appears to lie; and, because of decreased time available for the individual, one ends there too.

(5) To be sure, faculty interest in the big questions did not expire. They were left for 'safe-keeping in the hands of—what else?—specialists: the philosophers, the literature teachers, the artists, the directors of religious emphasis programs; in short, "the humanities" took them over. But these persons as specialists *ipso facto* were considered incompetent in the increasingly important natural and social sciences. Too often their mentioning of a subject gave it the kiss of death in the eyes of the alert student. In addition, these teachers of appreciation tended to become a sort of history teacher; thus they were wont to emphasize the forms of the questions raised by our ancestors.

(6) Finally one cannot omit bowing to the truism that we live in an "age of anxiety." One can hardly expect the faculty man to be exempt from the nervousness of his time or the consequent lust for certainty. What is more natural than that he should find in the formulations and answers of the past a handy reply to those who cry havoc?

Put these six ingredients together and you have a potent narcotic.

V.

The colleges of the future will be vital only if they are preoccupied with the search for the particular questions implicit in current knowledge. Only as we expose ourselves along the entire range of the growing edge of our knowledge will it begin to appear just what our problems are. But we must so expose ourselves and our students. That will mean spending some time outside of the specialists' cubby-holes. However, once we begin to realize that all of the questions have not been framed and all of the possibilities have not been outlined, we shall have renewed interest in the intellectual community.

There are a number of specific implications of this course which need attention here. This course, for example, implies a growing conviction that a college exists primarily to give men opportunity to satisfy their curiosity and to share their findings with others. Here is a principle of unity, for which the colleges have so long gone begging. (Cf. Moberly's, *The Crisis of the University*, without a reference to which no essay on higher education these days seems quite dressed.) Manifestly, a college cannot thrive if it is a congeries of enterprises at cross purposes with each other. But neither can it thrive as a unified agency propagandizing a particular crystallized viewpoint. Enthusiastic health lies only in the direction of the college as the investigating community.

It follows that the college will have to become more of an intellectual institution than it presently is. Perhaps we shall have to sponsor the development of junior colleges open to all so that the college can go about its proper business. Somehow we shall have to reverse the trend of admitting as many students as will fill the budget and then deciding what kind of institution they make us.

The wise administrator will take as his prime task that of stimulating faculty discourse across departmental lines. This will mean some anxious moments for him; there will be friction among the faculty. Exchange of opinion about things that count is impossible without it. It will take skill and a clear understanding of the nature of this intellectual crisis if he is to keep the discourse productively rolling once the vapid peace of our time has been dispelled. He will have to find or make programs for assisting the process. He might, for example, encourage the development of a program of sabbaticals in residence whereby professors would study at their own institution in the fields in which they are most ignorant. However, it should be clear that the crux of the matter is not a need for another five million dollar "development program" but only the need for a steady look at what a college is and is not. Any college library and faculty are the resources for this first step.

Finally, a few relations between the thesis of this essay and the current general education movement need mention. It is no secret that this paper has sprung from ground watered by the champions of liberal education. That does not, however, imply that anything in the name of general or liberal education is con-

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sidered promising here. Some rigorous examination of the movement is needed and it is big enough now to stand it.

For example, it is a fairly backward president of a small college who has not by now declared himself in favor of "ideas rather than facts." On the whole, this emphasis seems well taken. But some of us are a bit concerned that *which* ideas. Is it to be assumed that we have an achieved general concensus as to the concepts which underlie western culture? Then what? Is the college to be a wet nurse passing them on? If so, the college certainly will end in the same position as it has now as soon as the novelty of "ideas rather than facts" has worn off. The point is that ideas or concepts in themselves are of no more hope than facts. What is important is that concepts, ideas and facts, all shall be used so that the student is brought into the process of exploring. The accent must be on the process not on the conclusions, however generally the latter may be stated.

Secondly, general education has sponsored a great new awareness of the tradition of western civilizations. So far as this arouses in the student "the thrill of tradition," that is, helps him find his personal and social roots, to that extent we may rejoice. But again one must ask that that tradition be seen primarily as an aid in helping the person define the issues of his own time. Nor is this a gratuitous request. Since courses in tradition start back in ancient times most frequently, and since the difficulty of getting through a syllabus are known to all, one has to recognize the danger of throwing the student on his own for the twentieth century, the most astounding of all. If this happens, he will be equipped nicely to debate whether men are determined or have free will; but he will know little of the mankind still largely undiscovered in the research journals of the last fifty years.

Thirdly, one must look askance at the development of specialists and special courses in general education. On the face of it, this trend merely increases the fractionalization of the campus. We shall have to be careful that the forms of education inherited from the free elective and specialization tradition do not so limit the discourse on the fundamentally human questions as to make real liberal education impossible, even when we have the most ornate structures for it.

The hope of the small American colleges lies in their becoming communities of the inquisitive. The focus must be on the wide open intellectual future. Here is a frontier to stagger the imagination. Its possibilities, steadily viewed, are enough to frenzy the dormant enthusiasms of the colleges. Here is opportunity for exploration with few parallels. All of these years we have been writing resolutions demanding academic freedom just so that we might face this privilege. Perhaps it takes bored students, indifferent patrons and shrunken salary checks to make us see the opportunity. But here it is. To fail to share in the search for the new questions is to drowse while George Anthropos invents the wheel.

Faith and the State University

CYRUS R. PANGBORN



THE TAX-SUPPORTED INSTITUTION of higher learning is teaching religion no longer by accident but by design. Once a rarity, the practice is now widespread — sufficiently so, in fact, to challenge the monopoly once held by private and church-related colleges on a curriculum specializing in the humanities and professedly religious in orientation.

There was a time when the private college¹ could justify its appeal for students and philanthropy on one or more of three overlapping grounds: 1) the school placed religion at the center of its curriculum; 2) the faculty members were chosen for their Christian character as much as for their scholarly competence; 3) the environment was conducive to growth in the Christian life. It is to be doubted, however, whether any except the narrowly sectarian school can longer offer these as unique grounds for existence. Today, competition for students and the economic problem of an institution's survival mold curriculum, determine faculty personnel, affect admissions standards, and displace religion from its reigning place at the center of the educational enterprise.

While the private college is facing the difficulty of maintaining standards in the humanities, the state university is strengthening its offerings in general education. Few will doubt the value of the latter, unless or until it is observed that someone may ask if this is not a threat to the separation of Church and State. To this question the answer will usually suffice that a general education which excludes attention to the role of religion in culture is "mis-education." A second question, however, is less easily answered. Is religion properly treated, the query runs, unless its teaching leads to evangelical results: that is, to commitments and the embrace of faith? The state school finds it difficult to answer this question acceptably to others because the private college has its own idea of what commitment is *to*, and what the content of faith is. If it is said that a teacher of religion is justified by leading students to the recognition of the necessity of commitment, that the classroom definition of the object of commitment should be Truth, and that faith must be understood as the necessary presuppositions to our existence and our search for Truth, then many evangelicals doubt that anything of religious importance is going on in the classroom. Here, the advocate of such an approach must take the offensive. For he has reason to believe that his way may not only have relevance for a more traditional conception of what is good evangelical re-

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¹The term "private college" will be used hereafter to designate any non-tax-supported college or university. Many such colleges are either church related or once were church-related.

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ligion, but may actually be as effective as a more direct, apologetic approach in leading students toward genuine religious experience.

It is precisely such confidence that is voiced by President Julius Seelye Bixler of Colby College in his *Ayer Lectures*² for 1948. Few have stated as pertinently the case for a new appraisal of the objectives of teaching religion—a judgment which will be bolstered shortly with evidence gathered from a class in religion in a state university.

Bixler's analysis of the problem of a recovery of faith begins with a statement of the religious convictions which college students have lost. It is his aim thereafter to show that any adequate new faith must be a rational one wherein what appears as revelation must submit to rational tests. Pointing out the ultimate uses of reason made even by critics of liberal rationalism, he affirms that "knowledge cannot be a barrier to the life of the spirit because the demand for more knowledge is itself a spiritual demand." (p. 26) He would employ reason, negatively, to make sure "that our beliefs are free from contradiction," and positively, "to realize the kinship of our loyalty to God and our loyalty to truth." (p. 28)

We may now sharpen our issues by restating the objections made by proponents of traditional evangelicalism in the classroom. They will be reluctant to admit that the faith President Bixler would evolve from liberal rationalism is really faith at all. They will doubt, in the second place, that the method of teaching religion as a body of historical, cultural, and psychological knowledge—which is the way most state universities are teaching it—has much direct causal effect upon the production of religious faith, however defined. They will grant the contribution of such an approach to the cause of religious literacy, but they incline to doubt that this is enough or that it will lead a student to the ultimately desirable act of commitment. These doubts are not wholly justifiable. By first looking at our religious losses and then at the values for faith of courses taught as the state university teaches them, it may be concluded that the private college should join President Bixler in reappraising the results obtainable by teaching religion as a body of relatively objective knowledge.

What have we lost? The orthodox will agree with Bixler's list of losses while viewing the matter with more alarm than he does. In the first place, gone is the older "clear-cut idea of the nature of the highest good and the manner of its appearance to men" (p. 21). Gone likewise are beliefs in "a judging Presence" and "the nearness of the spiritual world and its responsiveness to all our higher intuitions." More concretely, we have lost knowledge of ourselves as "man" and faith in our corporate institution of religion, the church. Such are the losses, but not without some gain. At least, the absence of the kind of atmosphere in which these religious beliefs were at home has meant, he thinks, the freeing of religion

²Published in 1951 under the title *A Faith that Fulfills* by Harper and Brothers, New York.

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from complicity in encouraging morbid introspection. We need not fear that students will neglect "what is going on in the depths of their emotions." But older beliefs and ways of teaching too often encouraged emotional withdrawal, when the proper task is to relate what is found at inner depths to conceptions both rational and universal. Private feelings, often dangerous, must be drawn into a pattern of experience which includes ideas held in common. For ideas are "patterns visible to the mind's eye, and to see them at all is to see them as other men do and to enter into an experience that is shared" (p. 23). It is not so much the old clarity and preciseness that we should want to recover. There may be something of greater value: richness of perception. And while Bixler has not said so, another might suggest that this compensation is most promisingly offered by the increasing concern of the state university for the teaching of religion, and by the private college's courageous adoption of the objective and rational approach in place of the older, frank or ill-concealed apologetics.

II

The basis for the suggestion just made is given by the body of answers received to a question in a final examination. Students of a two-semester, "general education" course, Religion in Human Culture, at the State University of Iowa, were asked what change had occurred in their ideas about religion as a result of taking this course alone. Had the intention of the course been the recovery of those lost certainties noted by Bixler, the answers of these students would clearly have indicated a teaching failure. The student who wrote that the course was not "conducive to conversion" was right; it wasn't and it wasn't intended to be. There were Protestants, Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Jews, and skeptics to be respected, not to mention the obligation to treat—without mockery—primitive, ancient, and living religions of many varieties. But if the result, in the first instance, was no recovery of a "clear-cut idea of the nature of the highest good," these students did grasp the fact that men inevitably *seek* such a clear-cut idea. They learned that the search at least is inescapable unless the meaning is to vanish from human existence. With Augustine, they sensed that even if perfection is not within our grasp, there may be a way of walking perfectly on the road to perfection.

Students who had lost the "belief in a judging Presence" did not testify to having regained it. That may come. Meanwhile, they have an idea new to them and very important, however common it may seem to professionals in religion. With almost the force of sudden revelation, they grasped the idea that the vitality of a culture and of a religion itself is guaranteed only when a prophetic critique of both is permitted and formulated. Catholics acknowledged indebtedness to Luther for his share in precipitating the Council of Trent, while Protestants awoke to the value of Boniface's "Clericis Laicos" as a prophetic assertion of a church's rights over against the State. It was learned that religion stands willynilly within culture, but that its capacity to endure as a vital

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force depends upon its standing above culture as well. The idea is at least kin to the idea of a judging Presence and must in any case be something of the intellectual content of any tenable religious system which includes faith in such a Presence.

The "nearness of the spiritual world," likewise was not driven home by this course. It was the *reality* rather than the *nearness* of this world which these students learned to accept as an article of faith. A Protestant girl wrote that she had been tending toward too great a "liberality" but now was no longer afraid to assume a spiritual reality. On the other hand, a Catholic girl, who had been believing in this reality on the basis of authority alone, viewed with appreciation the universality of religion. This led her to see that the belief in the reality of the spiritual world is ultimately not so much proved as explained by authority, and is grounded not so much on certainty as in faith. Bringing spiritual reality near is the problem of the churches and of religious persons; the contribution of this course was that it at least reassured students of a spiritual reality to which they could draw near if they would.

"We no longer know who we are ourselves," writes Bixler. He goes on to suggest that self-knowledge will come more effectively with the sharing of ideas than by the older morbid introspection of agonizing over salvation. One examination paper bears him out with its almost revivalistic testimony. By a year's study of man's search for God, a Protestant girl wrote, she had come to a knowledge of God which had led also to a knowledge of man and of herself in particular. "Before I walked in this door," she confided, "I didn't know what I wanted out of life. When I walk out this morning I know and I understand what I want to do and why I want to do it."

The sharing of ideas has an effect beyond correcting the introspective adolescent's view of life. It creates a new outlook toward the church, or more broadly speaking, the institutionalization of religion. If this class saw anything, it was that the institutional drive is the basic impulse to share a saving idea. Just as this impulse to share is inevitable, so also are creeds and organized fellowships and cathedrals if transmission of ideas is to occur. No attitude toward a religious question changed in quite such measure as did this one, according to these students. Paper after paper stressed new appreciation of the importance of institutionalization to the continuity and development of religion and culture. What is this if it is not a newfound respect for the church and the communion of the saints—the necessary requisite to the churches' gaining a hearing at all! Such are the ideas and convictions substituted for the old and now vanished clarities.

In addition to statements having this direct relation to President Bixler's analysis, the students voiced some other ideas relevant to the thesis that non-apologetic teaching has values comparable to any claimed for an approach more

explicitly defined in terms of evangelical objectives. Still in the context of the changes that had occurred in their thinking about religion, these students expressed convictions which readily fall under four heads. It may frighten narrow sectaries, but I do not see how others can see as anything but gain the qualification of an illiterate absolutism with a literate relativism. Student after student confessed that he had found understanding of and respect for other people and their different religious ideas while *strengthening his feeling of responsibility to his own tradition*. Contrary to defamers of all relativism as nothing but an acceptance of all views as equally valid, there is a justifiable kind of relativism constituted of humility and the recognition that all human expression and achievement is provisional and incomplete. Close kin to this outlook adopted by many of them was their oft noted realization that religion, like culture, is subject to change and makes its adjustments. Essentially this is the discovery that history is not static, which seems a simple truism until one is made aware of how many students have it to learn. The chief derivative value of this discovery was a new sense of freedom to be loyal to one's particular religious tradition without feeling bound to excuse its mistakes, shortcomings, or excesses. A Lutheran student, for example, felt emancipated when she had extricated Luther's religious theory—in which she believed—from necessary and permanent involvement in his social theory—about which she felt embarrassment. So far we have, then, a humble relativism, but also a new-found freedom to heighten loyalty by attaching it critically to the defensible in one's faith.

The third general conviction expressed was really the framework in which a new respect for religious institutions was set. This more general idea was that religion is not merely an individual matter but also a social one. Here in their answers students gave evidence of moving out of adolescent preoccupation with self and away from so much of Protestantism's over-emphasis upon individualistic nominalism into a new world of understood relationships. They did not stop with acceptance of the corporate as well as the individual nature of *religion*. They went on to transcend the prejudice against the "church meddling in politics" by noting the nature of the church as one of many social institutions and its therefore inescapable involvement in society, with an obligation at the same time to defend its autonomy and essential witness from corruption and exploitation. Within this greater understanding of religion and social forces generally, students in some measure "found themselves." Before taking the course, wrote one student, "I was vague about what the issues (of importance for religion and society) were. Now I know what they are and where I stand." "The course gave me ideals," stated another—surely overgenerously—and added that he had abandoned an economic interpretation of history because religion has been at least as much a cause of change as any other social force. Granting the extent of religion's social effect historically, he said he had decided that what *kind* of effect religion has is a crucial matter. This involves him in personal

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responsibility. Once a Sunday Christian, he had come to see that being religious is "a full-time concern." Still another spoke of gratitude for the insight that the Bible *contains* the Word of God, and managed to convey the idea that the unresolved contradiction between Sunday School Biblicism and the emerging doubts of a more mature and critical mind had for far too long been disabling to his understanding.

III

If my conclusions are not altogether plain by now, they may be made so. The use of reason to assay the role of religion in culture and to analyze and compare religious ideas confronts students with the persisting claims of faith and inevitably raises for students the question of their own faith or lack of it. While the precise content of personal faith may not be prescribed in the state university's classroom, the classroom can make its contribution by promoting the requisite literacy. For this task, the tools of the state university school or department of religion are, or can be made, at least the equal of those possessed by private colleges. Likewise, the state schools have shown as much concern for choosing religious teachers for the field of religion as have the private schools. Many a private college is already using the approach described in this account—that is, the study of religion in a respectably academic and reasonably objective way. Others might be well advised to do so, inasmuch as student bodies of any except narrowly sectarian colleges are very nearly as heterogeneous as those of state universities; and the effect of a deliberately partisan approach to the teaching of religion in all types of institutions, therefore, may alienate as much as persuade.

"Knowledge," writes Bixler, "cannot be a barrier to the life of the spirit because the demand for more knowledge is itself a spiritual demand." To discount this as liberal rationalism will not obscure the fact that much of the talk about the "Christian atmosphere of our college" is cant. The simple affirmation of a school that it is doing something to increase students' knowledge of religion bespeaks an integrity that will go as far as anything toward rehabilitation of religion in higher education and of religious living on a college campus. The state schools may be doing as well as our "Christian" colleges in securing exactly just such results.

Books and Publications

Christian Faith and Higher Education. By Nels F. S. Ferré, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954. 245 pages. \$3.00.

This book by the respected author of a number of theological works, now professor of Philosophical Theology at Vanderbilt University, was written partly in response to encouragement by the Commission on Christian Higher Education of the National Council of Churches. Dr. Ferré's purpose is evidently to give a "theological orientation" which previous works on the relation of Christian faith and higher education have lacked (p. 123). In this there are thorny problems aplenty and the author has tackled them with honesty, earnestness and a vast fund of information.

Beginning with an analysis of three interrelated processes in education—the selective transmission of culture, creative discovery, and the inner development of persons—Ferré concludes that "truth is (education's) only standard; making truth effective is its only goal". If religion is to be given a place in education, it must be on these terms: "Only as the nature of man, history, and reality require religious truth should it become part of education." (p. 35). Religion is then defined as "man's response as a whole to what he considers most important and most real" (p. 36). Religion is not a matter of specialized concern but is fundamental to all human experience. Man discovers that right and wrong are "necessary aspects of the world", that there is a "religious reality" which unites the most important and the most real, that he must integrate his life with this reality or suffer feelings of guilt and emptiness. Clearly, "religious reality" so conceived is integral to the educational process and might be expected to give it "unity and creative harmony".

Moving on from the religious to the specifically Christian, the author defines Christianity as "concern, or Christ's kind of love", which issues in "a new kind of community". This faith "gives universal meaning to experience" and can be vindicated on that basis alone. The rest of the book is devoted to spelling out this claim and its implications for all the principal concerns of higher education. A chapter on "God as Educator" argues that in the processes of life itself, in both the individual and social dimensions of experience, we are being led by God toward His purpose of effecting Christian community. This links education to concrete experience and leads to further suggestions regarding practical techniques, such as the use of case studies, the dynamics of group discussion, the place of decision and growth in educational procedures. Nothing in the life of academic communities, from the most exalted to the most mundane, seems to have been omitted. The book closes with chapters on what the author considers to be the Christian perspectives in the various academic disciplines and one on "The University and the World".

The basic question to be raised about the book is whether it is intended

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as an argument for the sole adequacy of Christian faith as the foundation for any philosophy of education, or whether it presents a more modest case for a Christian view which presupposes Christian commitment. The author seems to say both at different times. On the one hand, he says that, while a religious view "is incapable of proof in the absolute sense, it yet needs to be vindicated by its capacity to explain and direct experience". Christian faith is not "for the initiated only"; if it were, it would have no place in our "generally secularized universities or colleges" (p. 57). If he speaks of theology as a basis for education, he wants it understood that this is not "dogmatic" but "general", and perhaps much like the "metaphysics" which Dr. Hutchins prefers (p. 122f). "We believe that the kind of theology we here advocate is open to all churches and religions in the United States", (p. 141). Hence, the meaning of Christian love in social theory, for example, is not something known only to the initiated few but is intrinsic to the discipline itself. It is "enacted already before our eyes" if "the objective conditions for social behavior are combined with artful concern for true community" (p. 190). "Christianity is society with a capital S; it knows how to spell personal with a capital P." (p. 191).

On the other hand, it is admitted that Christian higher education presupposes commitment to a specifically Christian concept of community, and that the situation of the Christian in a secular university is very different from that of one in an avowedly Christian institution. In a secular setting, the Christian can often express his convictions only "indirectly", perhaps within "Christian cells" (see pp. 140, 160, 161). Here the theology of education seems to apply primarily to the Christian college rather than to higher education in general or to the academic disciplines *per se*. Confusion mounts to a climax when, in discussing the relation of Christian faith to the study of history, the author says in successive sentences: "God's plan for history . . . is neither imposed on history nor read into it; it can be studied in history, *and must indeed be reached from such study*"; then, "The Christian faith *alone* can discover and use the master key of historical interpretation"! (p. 198; italics supplied). The result is that the book never clearly emerges either as a theology of education for the Christian college or as a broader philosophy of higher education which might interpret the Christian position in its relation to non-Christian views.

Despite this failing, and also a certain unevenness in the quality of some of the contents, there is much that is sound and valuable in this painstaking inquiry. It will undoubtedly take its place in bibliographies of important books in this field. If Dr. Ferré has not given us the last word on the subject, it is also very probable that no one ever will.

Walter E. Wiest

Communism in Education in Asia, Africa and the Far Pacific. By Walter Crosby Eells. Washington: American Council on Education, 1954. \$3.00.

Ideas are not empty things. They have hands and feet. They take time but they worm their way into the emotional roots of man's being and there harnessing the dynamic power of action explode in constructive or destructive activities of individuals and groups. Communism is a programme of action. Unlike many systems of ideas that are only or mainly world-views which individuals can merely contemplate without any committal, communism because of its inherently dynamic nature exhibits its explosive character sooner than others. Therefore a successful encounter with communism has to be double edged; it must present an alternative system of ideas and at the same time relate to the emotional drive of man in order that consequences in the realm of action may immediately follow.

Considered from the above point of view, Dr. Eells' book is a notable contribution. Not that there is a theoretical exposition of the communist philosophy or an intellectual criticism of it in this book. There is no need for that; others have done that work and done it well. Dr. Eells' specific purpose is to give a first-hand, factual report of the extent to which communist ideology and communist programme of action have entered the schools, colleges and universities of the thirty nine countries he has visited in the last six to seven years. The report is well-documented, and it is commendably free from any interpretation of the facts observed based on an irrational fear of communism which is the besetting sin of many writers on this subject. The book makes it abundantly clear that the threat of communism in education in Asia, Africa and the Far Pacific is not a mere "red herring". It is a real danger and there is no doubt communism is making a great bid to capture the minds and hearts of young people in these lands. The extent to which it has infiltrated into these educational institutions varies from country to country and in the same country in different parts of it, but there is no denying the fact on the evidence accumulated that it is making an all-out effort to take hold of the minds of the young for its purposes.

The two most valuable chapters in Dr. Eells' book are the first and the last chapters. The first chapter is a clear and concise analysis of the major causes of communist influence among teachers and students in the countries of Asia, Africa and the Far Pacific. Communism is a past-master in fishing in troubled waters, and the waters in these areas are very troubled indeed. The economic conditions are terrible; the teachers' salaries are miserably low and large numbers of young people with high hopes and eager idealism are unemployed. The problem of the educated unemployed in many of these countries, especially in India, is the most dangerous and unless these men are given the chance to use their talents and training in constructive and meaningful activities and occupations they will turn in larger numbers than they do now to become leaders in the communist movement.

None of these causes of communist influence can be counteracted by the unaided efforts of the governments concerned. A lot is being done by these gov-

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ernments but it is not commensurate with the immensity of the problems. Besides, what is necessary is a quick removal of the conditions that afford a favourable soil to the growth of communism. This can only be accomplished by the concerted effort of all democratic nations joining together in a mighty effort. The last chapter in the book contains a mine of suggestions just in this regard. Dr. Eells enumerates a number of things that the United States can do better and in addition to what it is already doing to combat communist influence on education abroad. All of them are based on the conviction that the challenge of communism cannot be adequately met by military assistance alone but only by a demonstration that "democracy can deliver the goods", that it is possible for a democratic government to solve the economic and social problems of a country better than communism. But the democratic way of revolution which preserves the precious right of freedom of the individual cannot succeed in the quick way it is necessary for it to succeed unless the more advanced and well-to-do democracies of the world join hands with the countries that have recently achieved their independence and together build the new world. Unless the democracies of the world out-think, out-feel and out-do the communist regimes, the war of ideas cannot be won and a really new order preserving the worth and dignity of the individual cannot come to pass in these many countries of Asia, Africa and the Far Pacific.

Dr. Eells deserves our grateful thanks for writing this book. He has rendered an invaluable service to all lovers of democracy and all those broad-minded Americans who have a genuine desire to help struggling democracies fulfill their hopes of a new, free and better world.

David G. Moses

The American College Chaplaincy. By Seymour A. Smith. New York: Association Press, 1954. 180 pages. \$3.75.

Chaplains, whether they be army, prison, or college, are perhaps the most anonymous professional group of men and women in the world. Churches have ministers, hospitals have doctors, colleges have professors, but where is the place for chaplains? Dr. Clarence P. Shedd of Yale Divinity School, after many years and many personal encounters with these apparitions on college campuses, decided to invite them out of the shadows into the light of a national conference, figuring perhaps that if you get enough of them together they would constitute a substantial body. His intuition proved correct, but before he could extend invitations to these college chaplains he gave an associate the task of finding out who they were and where they were located. Out of this assignment grew the present volume on *The American College Chaplaincy*, by Seymour Smith.

Dr. Smith served as secretary to this first Conference at Yale in 1948, and has followed through subsequent years the growth of this National Association of

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College and University Chaplains. The importance of the jobs these chaplains are called to do, the problems they faced, their successes, their failures, their growth in numbers, all came to light as they met together in annual conference. And thus this study had to be enlarged to encompass much more than a mere who's where. Chapters are devoted to the growth of the chaplaincy, roles of the chaplain as preacher, teacher, director and counselor, the chaplain's training and experience, and problems of the chaplaincy. Through the use of an extensive questionnaire, personal interviews, and observation, Dr. Smith is able to describe in some detail the variety of religious approaches being made by these chaplains on their various campuses.

The scope of the book is limited to include only independent and church-related colleges and universities. That there are a growing number of chaplains on state supported campuses is acknowledged by the author, but the role of chaplains in these schools is sufficiently different, according to the writer, as to require separate study.

The significance of this volume does not rest on the factual data presented in it. I find it not very instructive either for chaplains themselves, college administrators, or for students aiming at the chaplaincy as a vocational choice. The limitations of the methodology, a twenty-two page questionnaire chiefly, would be apparent in a more orderly field of study; where every pattern is cast in its own individual matrix, the statistical average is largely irrelevant.

But all concerned will be grateful to the author for pointing out the considerable growth of the chaplaincy the last few years, and, for the first time, focusing attention on the chaplain's role in religion in higher education. What might well turn out to be the cornerstone, has been a rejected stone by most of the architects. For example, the "Supplement Issue" of *The Christian Scholar* which contained reports of the First Quadrennial Convocation of Christian Colleges, contains just two paragraphs on the role of the chaplain. But, read with imagination, these two paragraphs (Pages 228, 229), along with Dr. Smith's thesis, suggests that one of the keys to the thorny "University Question" has been overlooked and neglected.

The role of the chaplain as minister to the community of scholars is still to be assayed. Reports of the yearly conferences of The National Association of College and University Chaplains are pregnant with suggestions. But someone other than chaplains themselves ought to join in the dialogue. One University Chancellor, with an uncommon amount of common sense, compared the chaplain to a landscape gardener, who discovers green shoots of religious vitality springing up all over the place, some of it planted and nourished, much of it unintended. With eyes to see and ears to hear he discovers a quiet, reserved professor wielding a tremendous spiritual influence, an advisor who awakens slumbering ideals in the

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hearts of students, a student government leader whose clean, quick mind leavens the loaf-ers around him. The chaplain nourishes and cultivates all such, quietly labelling them in his mind, and proceeds to arrange them into an harmonious and fruitful pattern. He then serves as a guide to all who live in sight of the garden.

If this sounds like something out of W. H. Hudson, it is, I submit, suggestive of the kind of thinking that needs to go into an analysis of the chaplaincy.

J. C. Herrin

Faith Active in Love. By George Forell. New York: The American Press, 1954. 198 pages. \$3.75.

Dr. Forell's book supplies a much needed corrective to the appraisal of the social ethics of Luther prevalent in America. Relying primarily on Luther's own words, he has succeeded in stating clearly both the theological basis and the practical implications of Luther's ethics of love.

Forell begins with the familiar problem that protagonists of many causes have never failed to find a vivid paragraph in Luther to cite in their own favor. More importantly, he examines and refutes the interpretation of Luther which, on the authority of Troeltsch, places the Reformer in a typological strait-jacket and then accuses him of ethical inertia and moral compromise.

The essence of the argument is that Luther is to be understood existentially, that the experience of the forgiveness of sins as the objective deed of God in Christ supplies the theological basis for an ethics which is the expression of this faith in an active love. Love finds its practical outlet in the natural orders of society, within which it has a calling to serve its neighbor. At the same time the sense of the impending end of the world restrains this love from Utopian excess and keeps it aware of the limitations of our interim existence.

Both directly and by implication Forell's work raises important issues for philosophy, ethics, and social science.

One possible reading of Luther, as here expounded, questions the validity of the entire philosophical enterprise. For we are told that it was a tragedy that "the theologian, who was vitally concerned with God's deeds for man, fell among the metaphysicians, who cared only for man's thoughts about God." Reason has its place in Luther's thought, of course, but only if it behaves itself properly "as a tool in the service of God." We may validly ask, what kind of philosophy is possible on these terms? How does one, furthermore, escape the not unfamiliar situation in which philosophy is the servant not of God but of a particular theological orthodoxy? May the philosophers not on this ground perhaps successfully plead self-defense in their rejection of theology?

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One answer, which Forell endorses, identifies Luther with a contemporary philosophical temperament (one dare not call it a *system*), and one must ask, is this marriage with existentialism one of apologetic convenience or is it based on an essential compatibility? Here is an issue which the philosophers might well chew over, especially since the claim Forell makes for existentialism is not new.

Luther's approach to ethical problems is also important, for the existence of both an ethical principle and a practical one suggests that moral decisions require not only the impelling motivation of a divinely given love but also some knowledge of social structures and one's place in them. Intelligent Christian action, in other words, is not possible on the basis of an enthusiastic ignorance. The concerned Christian must possess a theory of society as well as an ethical compulsion. Both the doctrine of the orders of creation and the two-kingdom theory suggest, moreover, that there is a Lutheran theory of society; Luther had a normative concept of good order in society and thus a concept of a good society. This normative theory rested in part on his appraisal of the contemporary scene; it described the world he knew just as much as it prescribed how men should act in that world. But the social landscape has undergone drastic alterations since the sixteenth century. To what degree are Luther's theories valid in a mass industrial society? What is their relationship to the customary pluralistic defense of democratic institutions, a defense indebted in part to seventeenth century Puritan thought?

These are just some of the questions which a reading of this excellent book prompts. One could question whether in dealing rather cavalierly with Max Weber, Forell has not relied too much on an unfortunate secondary source (Robertson). One could also question whether the relationship between Luther and the welfare state in Germany and Scandinavia is as obvious as it seems to Dr. Forell, especially since the kind of thinking which dominated much of German Lutheran theology until recently has been called a basic betrayal of the Reformer. Nor is the situation improved if one seeks to trace the lines of influence through the anti-clerical Swedish Social Democrats.

But Dr. Forell should not be held fully accountable here, for his major concern was not to trace the influence of Luther but simply to expound his thought. In this he has succeeded admirably; he writes with vigor and clarity; he provides the reader with a treasury of quotations, excellently translated; and if upon occasion he writes with a chip on his shoulder, the spirited writing adds to the flavor of his book.

Karl H. Hertz

The Measure of Man. Joseph Wood Krutch. New York. Bobbs-Merrill. 261 pages. \$3.50.

Here is one of the greatest of the old-line humanists doing battle with the

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mechanists, his weapons a sensitivity to the human and social realities, a notably felicitous style, and a no less notable polemical skill.

My first impression was that while his points were beautifully made, they were so obvious as to be hardly worth making, or worth Mr. Krutch's skilled attention. But I was shortly persuaded, by reading the book, that I had not reckoned with the actual pretensions of the proponents of human engineering, nor fully measured their influence. I had read the statement of the Dean of the Humanities of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology about our "approaching scientific ability to control men's thoughts with precision" (p. 45) and had relished Mr. Churchill's comment on the same occasion in 1949, that "he would be very content to be dead before that happens". But I had not realized how numerous are the parallels to this statement of the Dean's, nor how far the same assumption has penetrated into the schools and professional assemblies of the "human scientists". Mr. Krutch assembles the quotations, and they make pretty grisly reading. But more important than the overt utterances of the academics, is the seeping into the minds of non-academic men of the conviction that human and social life is subject to the same necessities as is the subject-matter of the physical sciences, and subject also to the same controls.

This mood would be menacing, so Mr. Krutch argues, even if its presuppositions were correct. For even the assumption that man is wholly manipulable, whether it be true or false, contributes to the destruction of manhood. If it is true, it is knowledge which we cannot afford, for even the illusion of freedom is better than its denial.

The presuppositions of the human scientists are dangerous even if they are true, but they are of course not true. It is not at all to be denied that man is subject to biologic and psychic and social conditioning, but to run this insight through into a denial of freedom and rationality is a manifestly self-contradictory procedure. For the perception that man is a conditioned being is itself a rational perception. "How . . . can the consciousness be dismissed as an epiphenomenon when only by virtue of this epiphenomenon could it be perceived to be an epiphenomenon—or anything else." (p. 122).

Mr. Krutch deals faithfully with a variety of mechanistic notions, and faithfully puts the necessary questions. For those who propose to build an apparatus of social conditioning, and eventually to institute a complex and comprehensive mechanism of social controls, he has the obvious question: And who is to control the controllers? Have we any conceivable guarantee either of their benevolence or of their manipulative dexterity, and have we any possible ground for believing that we should buy their collective wisdom at the price of our (even illusory) freedom?

Again, how are the blue-prints for this job of social engineering to be prepared? There is good ground for believing, on the basis of the utterances of the

social scientists themselves, that the normal is to be taken as the normative, and that the measure of the good life is to be statistical. "This is the Age of Statistics as well as the Age of Anxiety" . . . "(p. 141) but we claim the right to measure life's meaning in depth as well as in statistical breadth, and to believe that "what a Shakespeare has to say about human nature and human conduct is likely to be as true as, and rather more important than, what the summarizer of ten thousand questionnaires can tell us." (p. 232).

The paradox of freedom and necessity is no more difficult and no less inescapable than the principle of indeterminacy in physics, the category of probability in mathematics, or the metaphysical-psychological problem of sensation. It is only one of the areas in which "The seemingly impossible is the most indisputably true." (p. 125).

Mr. Krutch even has the patience to deal seriously with the notion that in the electronic calculator we have a "thinking machine", so that the scientist has at last reproduced the highest potentiality of man, and that under manipulative control. But again there are questions to ask: "Is [the machine] capable, we might ask, of imagination? Does it have any curiosity? Can it sympathize with anything? Can it be happy or miserable? Was it ever known to laugh, or even to show, by any unwonted flickering in its tubes, that it considered something amusing? Does it—and this is most important of all—prefer one thing to another, or does it have its being in a universe where nothing has value, where all things are indifferent?" (p. 169)

This paraphrase does small justice to Mr. Krutch's eloquent and meticulous writing, but I don't think it misrepresents his argument. It is difficult to know which is the more bewildering: the fatuity of the positions he attacks, or his serious-minded diligence in discussing them. One's first instinct is to think that the case would be dealt with best by a belly-laugh, and that Mr. Krutch might have saved his great talents for a more important book. But three things make one pause: first, he has the documentation and it is alarming enough; second, one knows that it is necessary only to cross the university quadrangle to find people who espouse precisely the positions he attacks; and third, the prevalent mood of submission to psychic and social conditioning which he deplores might very easily pass into a mood of submission to the designs of the human engineers. We may believe that nothing can diminish the dimension of man's freedom, but there are many things that may inhibit its exercise, and even if George Orwell in 1984 overstates his case, the contemporary and totalitarian realities are alarming enough.

All that Mr. Krutch is concerned to do is to demonstrate that the least that is true of man is more than the merchants allow for. And since this apparently is not already obvious, he does it very well. The Christian difficulty with his argument is that while he recognizes the limited usefulness of demanding responsibility from men who do not know they are free, he is not able to acknowledge that man's

problem is in his freedom. He will have men see that their very humanness is in their freedom, but he does not apparently see that whatever appeal the mechanists have lies precisely in the fact that the freedom which is man's essence is also his burden and his problem. His polemic against the human engineers is a humane service, and at this point the Christians have in him an eloquent ally, along with all men who cherish their manhood and are unready to renounce it. But he has not actually taken the measure of man, either in his dignity or in his wretchedness. He appears to have read the Christians, but we have not managed to communicate with him. And so he is reduced to believing that the alternative to renouncing our humanity is simply to assert it. He has not heard or will not credit that it is our humanity—the dimension of our freedom—that is our problem: that, as Robert Penn Warren has it in *Brother to Dragons*, "There's no forgiveness for being human." There is an alternative to the renunciation of our humanity: its renovation! But that is not a human possibility, nor a humanist option.

ALEXANDER MILLER.

Culture and Faith. By Richard Kroner. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1951. 278 pages. \$5.00.

No task is more precarious and sure to provoke controversy than to set boundaries. There is no easy way to suit tenants on both sides. This is particularly true when one is surveying the boundary between faith and philosophy. "Christian philosophers" are suspect from both sides. The whole enterprise of reconciliation and mutual interpretation is often viewed as subversive by both theologians and philosophers, and not without cause!

It is therefore unfortunate that such a book as Richard Kroner's *Culture and Faith* should have been published with so little comment, for Richard Kroner is unusually equipped for the task of reopening discussion between philosophers and theologians. Historians of philosophy are still indebted to him for his study of German philosophy from Kant to Hegel; no less than theologians are for his little books on the philosophy of religion.

Finally, almost coincidental with the culmination of his distinguished career at Union Theological Seminary, he has offered his *magnum opus* to the academic world. It is based on the assumption that there "cannot be two kinds of truth, unrelated to each other. A new synthesis must be achieved."

To this end, Kroner begins his book with fundamental reflections on experience. Experience, he says, is "an indispensable point of departure" for gaining knowledge; and experience is defined broadly. Rationalism and Empiricism are not contradictory but complementary. "We have to trust immediate experience, i.e., the synthesis of sense-impression and rational form, although we cannot prove that this synthesis is true or that experience deserves to be trusted."

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From his reflections regarding experience Dr. Kroner moves to a discussion of the "antinomies of experience". He deals with four—individuality and universality, oneness and manifoldness, freedom and necessity, time and eternity. Each of these antinomies stem from the fundamental antinomy of self and world and point to the limits of culture. The analysis is penetrating throughout, and the discussion of freedom and necessity is particularly valuable.

The second portion of the book is devoted to a careful sketching of the various phases of culture in the light of the foregoing analysis. Dr. Kroner analyzes science, art, state, and morality, showing that in each lies the danger that its legitimacy will lead its advocate to transgress the limits of its partiality. Thus science and art may become *contemplative* attempts to solve prematurely the antinomy of ego and world; just as state and morality may become *active* attempts to solve the same antinomy.

The final portion of the book deals specifically with the problems of faith and culture by drawing heavily and profiting immensely from what has gone before. It is because of Dr. Kroner's interior understanding of both faith and philosophy than he diverges from many previous attempts at reconciliation. He writes, "There is no 'theological metaphysics,' as there is no 'metaphysical theology,' 'because both avenues of premature correlation 'disregard the limit of philosophy as well as the leap of faith.'"

Space forbids further or ampler analysis of Dr. Kroner's book. I shall restrict myself to three comments. First, one is tempted to say that each of the three parts of his book is so rich that it would have made a masterful contribution by itself, yet the three parts are so woven together that one is staggered at Dr. Kroner's insight and penetration. Second, one wishes that he had grappled more explicitly, though he certainly does by implication, with his divergences from such a theologian as Paul Tillich. One gets the impression that his criticisms would be both philosophical and theological, and sharp in both cases. Finally, one senses that if Dr. Kroner were to set himself to write the history of philosophy his grasp would be wide and his touch sure. Certainly one step on the way would be to give this present work the wide reading it deserves. No man may honestly say he has grappled with the problems of culture and faith until he has attempted mastery of Richard Kroner's truly monumental work.

John E. Burkhart

War, Peace, and the Christian Mind: a review of recent thought. By James Thayer Addison. Greenwich, Connecticut: The Seabury Press, 1953. XII, 112 pp., \$2.00.

The late Dr. Addison, invalided from his teaching service in the Episcopal Theological Seminary at Cambridge, continued to think clearly and to write precisely. In this little study, the last from his pen, he examined with his characteristic care the variety of positions which Christians have taken on the problem of war,

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and set forth without dogmatism his own analysis of each in the light of the atomic age.

The principal documents dealt with are the reports of Federal Council commissions in 1944, 1946, and 1950; similar ones from the Church of Scotland (1937), the Church of England (1930, 1948), and the British Council of Churches (1946); the COPEC (1924), Oxford (1937), and World Council (1948) reports; and a number of treatments of the issue by individual authors. The bibliography is practically definitive for major items in the field, and Addison's analysis is an amazing achievement in the small compass he allowed himself.

It is a limitation upon the present reviewer that he finds himself in substantial agreement with the position of the author. Perhaps another review, one by a convinced pacifist, would be desirable for adequate scholarly balance. For better or for worse, however, here is the report of one non-pacifist upon another's line of reasoning.

Dr. Addison begins by emphasizing "the area of agreement," pointing out that all true Christians hate war and that all seek for vital and constructive means toward its elimination. He notes also that in the years of debate since World War I each side has made many concessions to the other, so that the real difference among Christians today is much more certainly in the area of procedure than in that of basic principle.

Two chapters set forth the pacifist position, chiefly in the words of its proponents. Here non-resistance and passive resistance are clearly distinguished, and the latter is challenged as being "quite compatible with growing hatred and bitterness." Sharper challenges appear under the caption, "some pacifist errors." The view that "wars settle nothing" is refuted by a list of wars that settled a great deal. A careful distinction is made between moral and immoral *motives* for the use of violence. The theory that each war breeds another is shown to be based principally upon 1914-1945, with Franco-British relations since 1815 sharply in contrast. The survival of democracy in Switzerland, the Netherlands, Britain, and America is adduced in reply to the dictum that war necessarily is fatal to a democratic order.

Affirmatively, Addison goes on to insist that Christian love requires of us much more than simply non-resistance to evil. He points out that Christianity is not a code of rules, but an acceptance and a realization of the divine love. War, he urges, is not necessarily the worst of all possible evils, for the death of the body matters less than the destruction of the spirit. What needs always to be measured, along with the consequence of fighting, is the consequence of not having fought; and sometimes that may be argued to be even worse. The conclusion here is that "pacifism is not now a program that is politically practical," and that it will not be practical until we conquer those moral evils which exist in peacetime no less than under the conditions of war.

Coming to the days after Hiroshima, Addison agrees with the "Dun Com-

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mission" of 1950 in refusing "to find any moral distinction between destroying people by high explosives or fire and destroying them by atomic weapons." (One remembers the allies' excoriation of poison gas, the earlier outcry against gunpowder, and before these the protest of the French knights against the English yeoman's crossbow.) The book ends with a brief but ringing plea that, whatever the individual Christian may conclude about his own participation in war, all Christians shall unite their forces positively toward war's prevention.

This surely is the point not only of agreement, but also of principal concern. We shall not soon join in identifying *the* Christian position about military service, or about national action when the day of international conflict is upon us. We can unite, and as Christians we must, in making the procedural debate pointless by removing its occasion. Not what we individually shall do when war comes, but what we collectively shall do that it may not come, is our primary Christian problem in the international scene. That problem will be resolved only when Christian love has conquered the suspicions and the jealousies of humankind, and when active good will has come to dominate the chancelleries of the world.

Dr. Addison's last literary legacy, then, is much more than a treatise on our differences. It is a call to us, with all of our differences, to express our loyalty to our one Lord by serving and building God's kingdom on earth. Here pacifist and non-pacifist have not only common ground, but also an authentically common cause. If in the colleges students commit themselves to this cause of creative peace, they may not need so much to discuss the line of conduct they should take in war.

GEORGE HEDLEY

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Reports and Notices

The Consolidated Report – A Document for Study

PROLEGOMENA

The task of the Christian in the University is to make manifest, in the place where God has put him, what the University truly is when seen in the light of Jesus Christ who is the bearer of grace and truth. This task can be discharged through Christian obedience in intellectual encounter and personal involvement with the whole of its life.

This Christian obedience can be worked out in a three-fold way:

First, in *the search for knowledge*, that is to say in research and pure scholarship;

Second, in *the imparting of knowledge*, that is to say in the relations within the communities of scholars and students, between teachers and pupils, and among all those who are concerned with the educational process whether through finance or administration or in some other way; and,

Third, in *the application of knowledge*, that is to say in the attempt to do something about the problems and the needs of society as it exists outside the University.

Evangelism is the proclamation in word and deed of the saving Lordship of Jesus Christ over men, in every area of their lives, and in all their relations, as over the whole created world. The opportunities and obligations of evangelism arise in the University in this same three-fold way, in the search for knowledge, the imparting of knowledge, and the application of knowledge. Evangelism is thus not primarily something *ab extra*, some additional thing added to the life of reverent study and inquiry, of intimate personal relationships between scholar and student, and of deep concern for the society in which the University exists. Evangelism is so woven into the warp and woof of university life that it is integral to it, and shows itself in all the manifold aspects and activities of the university, throwing on everything the new light that has come to man in the revelation of Jesus Christ to illumine, judge, and redeem. In sum, since there are no solitary scholars or solitary Christians, since we are incorporated into body academic and received into the Church, our evangelistic responsibility as members of the body of Christ is in our life as professors and students. This at least is the ordinary context of our work, although we realize that we may have other evangelical obligations quite outside the University, and that our academic obligations themselves may often lead us outside the

This document was prepared at a Consultation of the University Commission of the World's Student Christian Federation held August 10-14, 1954, at Monmouth College in Illinois. It is part of a booklet which presents a full report of the Consultation. (See back cover of the December issue of *The Christian Scholar*.)

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University, e.g., to the local church, the school, the trade unions, and social agencies.

Likewise, the responsibility of the University to society is not discharged only in the application of knowledge to social problems and needs, but also in the development of integrity, honesty, and humility in personal relations, and even in the scholar's own independent and free research. This is so because the University is not only or even primarily an instrument of human society for the fulfillment of certain needs, but is integral to the very life of city, state, nation, and world.

A. THE SEARCH FOR KNOWLEDGE

The freedom of the search for knowledge is granted through our obedience to God. This obedience is rendered in the first place in honesty to the rules of scholarly inquiry, in humility before truth, in passionate endeavour to extend the limits of knowledge, and in tenacity, patience, and hope.

While the faithful Christian humbly shares this task with his non-Christian fellows, he has the comfort of believing that his research is not merely idle curiosity, but obedience to God. In striving not merely to accumulate knowledge, but to establish truth, he is giving glory to God. The quest for truth is the corporate attempt to participate in a reality other than ourselves; the reality with which different disciplines deal is apprehended only according to the rules accepted by the community engaged in the particular discipline. The urgent obligation of, for example, the scientist to share his discoveries with the community of scientists is again an indication of this communal nature of truth.

Our evangelistic task in research is to make this clear to the non-Christian and to show him Who is the God whom he ignorantly worships. All inquiry is a response to God's creative activity. It is because of this that the responsibility of the researcher is not only to his University, or to society, or even to the Church, but finally to God alone.

In order to be responsible to society the University must enjoy a certain amount of detachment and leisure. In order to be able to perform its critical and creative function, it must have a measure of reasonable independence and freedom. Therefore, its responsibility to society must not be interpreted to mean a dependence upon society to the point of receiving uncritically from it its criterion and standard of reference. The University must be free to judge whether beliefs and developments in society ought not to be opposed and corrected.

By these kinds of Christian participation in academic life, including the articulations of lay systematic theologians, a fresh symbolism for the expression

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and communication of the everlasting Gospel will be developed which will really speak to our time. Finally, evangelism in research will also include humble, joint efforts with non-Christians, to help the University to be a University, according to God's will.

B. THE IMPARTING OF KNOWLEDGE

The personal nature of truth is more clearly indicated in relationships between teacher and pupil. The teacher has to impart not only the results of his and other people's research within the community of scholars, but also to communicate something of the spirit of loyalty and integrity which is the basis of that community. If this is not done, the teacher may impart knowledge, but will not teach the truth. And, because the University is above all an infinitely varied series of inter-personal relationships, many unplanned occasions of Christian witness will occur, analogous to the way in which the ordinary affairs of life gave occasion to the first disciples to bear witness to their Lord. But since in our situation of a pagan or repaganized world, many are deprived of ordinary Christian nurture, they have to be introduced or re-introduced to Christ as adults. There is therefore a special need today for the proclamation by the lips of our personal allegiance to Jesus Christ, based on our own special encounter with Him.

It is, furthermore, a most important part of the educational task of the University to develop and nurture an ongoing succession of new leaders for society, young men and women equipped both intellectually and spiritually to play their part in making the changes that are imperative. Christians in the University have an obvious obligation here.

C. THE APPLICATION OF KNOWLEDGE

Although the University, to remain a University, must be primarily a transmitter of culture, of that which distinguishes man from other living creatures, of that which must be learned and cannot be inherited, — nevertheless, the transmission of the cultural tradition should never, and least of all today, be a process merely of *handing down* a dead tradition, instead of a process of *handing over* a living past, from generation to generation. It must be a vital process in which tradition is at once reduced, rejuvenated, and enriched. This process is a duty specifically appropriate to Christians in the University, a responsibility to be undertaken, of course, in the light of their Christian insights. It may be doubted whether Universities have ever in the past been relied on to such an extent to create culture. We have assumed (perhaps too easily) that this reliance is justified, but ought we not to keep our mind open to the possibility that other centers, the theater, literary groups, radio, television, the press, etc., may supplement and even surpass the University in this work? Ought we not to ask ourselves again in what sense Universities create culture?

But responsibilities flow both ways in University and society. If the society

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is to profit as a result of the University which it nurtures, it must provide the largest possible autonomy for the University. Only in an atmosphere of intellectual freedom can the University perform successfully the tasks above enumerated. This is not to say that society should blindly accept the judgments of the University, but that it should fearlessly and rationally appraise those judgments.

It follows also that the University must continuously re-examine itself in the context of the changing society. This is necessary in order that the University may continue to serve the best interests of society and fulfill its obligations to the greatest possible extent. In that re-examination adequate consideration should be given the spiritual aspects of University life as well as to its intellectual aspects.

EPILOGOMENA

As we reflect upon the situation in which we stand, we recognize that in all countries there are today powerful forces inside and outside the University, political, social, financial forces, which threaten the work and development of the University as we understand it. Recognizing his own share in the guilt of the world, but also his stake in a free University, the Christian must, together with his non-Christian colleagues, be prepared to defend the integrity of academic life. Certain areas in which re-examination of the relation of the University to society is called for today may be suggested. They are (1) academic freedom; (2) teaching, learning, and research as an experience of personal encounter and commitment; and (3) the human meaning of the intellectual and social forces shaping the culture of our time. The World's Student Christian Federation has a particular contribution of insights and leadership to give at these points.

New Relationship for SVM and USCC

DAVID B. SAGESER

Another example of the dynamic nature of "the emerging student Christian movement" in this country is provided by the announcement of a new relationship for the Student Volunteer Movement, which has become the Commission on World Mission of the United Student Christian Council. As such it represents USCC's concern for missions study and recruitment both in terms of the organized missionary enterprise and of new developments in missionary outreach, as well as continuing

to stimulate a re-thinking of the total concept of the world mission of the church.

While SVM becomes now a Commission rather than a "related movement" of USCC, it relinquishes none of its other relationships to other agencies, and continues as an integral part of the Joint Department on Christian Vocation of the National Council of Churches.

Some of the significant results of this new step are as follows: (1) USCC en-

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courages its member movements to recognize the staff of SVM as a part of the USCC staff. (2) The USCC affirms now its sponsorship of the SVM Quadrennial Student Conference scheduled for Christmas vacation, 1955. (3) There now appears possible an integrated approach to these common missionary concerns, particularly in the areas of study and field program, and the avoidance of parallelism and duplication of functions.

Perhaps most important of all, the trained observer will see in this development yet one more step in a process which may yet create an indigenous and more nearly integrated American student Christian movement. So fluid is the situation at this moment that no final predictions can be made, but the groundswell of student and staff opinion would seem to indicate a growing proclamation of their determination to be *together* and not separate.

National Chaplain's Conference

The National Association of College and University Chaplains plans to hold its next annual conference at the Chicago Theological Seminary, April 18-21, 1955. A series of lectures on "The Nature of the Church" will be given by Professor Pelikan of the theology faculty of the University of Chicago; Dr. Samuel Stevens, recently retired president of Grinnell College, is scheduled to give the presidential address. Dr. Ewald Nolte, of the Department of Church Music at North-

western University, will give both an organ recital and a lecture on musical churchmanship. Seminars will deal with such issues as interfaith work, educational desegregation, academic freedom and pressures; a special seminar will be held for new chaplains. The Conference chaplain will be Theodore Darrah of Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida. For full information concerning the conference, write to the Rev. Walter D. Wagoner, University Chaplain, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

The Knox Lectures

The Raymond Collyer Knox Memorial Lectures, three of which appear in this issue of *The Christian Scholar*, were delivered in April, 1954, as a part of the Bicentennial celebration of Columbia University. They were made possible by a gift from John L. Collyer and were intended to celebrate the memory of a beloved Chaplain of the University by providing a series of lectures on new and forward-looking developments in man's search for knowledge which have implications for

religion. The breadth of this provision was characteristic of Chaplain Knox's own religious outlook. His influence was exerted in the University from the beginning of his period of service as Chaplain (1908) to provide on a broad and inclusive basis both for instruction in religion and also for religious counseling and pastoral guidance. Professor Horace L. Friess of the Department of Philosophy of Columbia has written of Dr. Knox, "Everything he did for instruction was based on devotion to a

kind of religion that had nothing to fear and much to gain from full and many-sided investigation." (*Review of Religion*, vol. XVI, March 1952, page 160).

The Knox Lectures, by the provision of the donor, took place during Columbia's Bicentennial year and were obviously intended to be related to the Bicentennial theme: "Man's Right to Knowledge and the Free Use Thereof." Dr. Pollard argues, for example, that religious knowledge has its own categories of validity and is therefore to be accorded the sort of freedom in a modern liberal arts curriculum which is enjoyed by other respectable members of the family of intellectual discipline. Dr. Malik examines the presuppositions of the United Nations and concludes that the free exchange of opinion in an international forum is judged to be at least sufficiently worthwhile so that no member nation has so far ventured to withdraw from it. Dr. Greene gives attention to some of the divisions of outlook and presupposition which characterize modern philosophy and by his advocacy of an inclusive and dialectal approach to the solution of these problems lends weight to the argument for a maximum freedom and catholicity of outlook in higher education. The Raymond Collyer Knox Lectures represent a significant demonstration of the fruitfulness of conceiving of religion in a modern university as the underlying search for meaning,

running through all the various disciplines of the university's intellectual enterprise. A distinguished physical scientist, a wise and experienced political scientist, and a sensitive and perceptive modern philosopher all find spiritual significance in their own special concerns and are able to deepen the search for meaning and to clarify the response to that meaning.

Whatever may be the role of an undergraduate department of religion, dealing with the literature and history which have been taken to be authoritative by the main religions of mankind, there surely must also be carried on in the modern university the sort of broad inquiry about meaning by members of all the disciplines which make up the university's life and program, of which the Knox lectures are an example. If and when a new "*summa theologica*" appears, it cannot in our time be the work of a single theological scholar. The enormous complexity and range of modern knowledge means that a 20th century *Summa* will have to be a cooperative undertaking, shared by a whole host of specialists who are nevertheless concerned with the overall meaning and significance of their discoveries. It was with this purpose in mind that the Raymond Collyer Knox Lectures were arranged, and the results which are published in this issue of *The Christian Scholar* demonstrate the wisdom and fruitfulness of this approach to the role of religion in the modern university.

